

Arafat wants Sweden as mediator

STOCKHOLM (AFP) — Palestinian President Yasser Arafat said Tuesday he wanted Sweden to act as a mediator in Israeli-Palestinian negotiations on the future of Jerusalem, the Swedish radio station Ekoreaktion reported. Mr. Arafat said that former Swedish Foreign Minister Sten Andersson would be one of the mediators in any talks on Jerusalem and the return of Palestinian refugees. "We are in need of your help, I say it bluntly and openly," Mr. Arafat said after meeting with Prime Minister Ingvar Carlsson. Mr. Andersson currently heads an employment programme in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Mr. Carlsson's diplomatic advisor Lars Danielsson would not confirm or deny Mr. Arafat's statement. "Any possible Swedish involvement will be dependent on the willingness of both sides. That's the first prerequisite," he said. "The Swedish government has said for a long time that it is available to help, if the parties so will." Mr. Arafat said the Palestinians were "proud of their role" and attitude. He did not elaborate. Foreign Ministry officials would not comment on the statement. "I cannot comment. I have heard about it, but I cannot comment," ministry spokesman Ulrika Long told AFP.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جوردان تايمز يومية سياسية تصدر بالانجليزية عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية، الرابطة.

U.S. builds up forces in Gulf

NEW YORK (RI) — The United States has built up its forces and weapon stockpiles in the Gulf since last summer due to alarm over renewed Iraqi military capability, the New York Times reported on Tuesday. The paper said a dozen navy cargo ships laden with tanks, armoured vehicles and other military hardware were moved from the U.S. base at Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean and are now anchored off Bahrain. The Times said U.S. Defence Intelligence Agency analysts concluded that Iraq's military had developed the capacity to send five armoured divisions into Kuwait at 12 hours notice. The reinforcements included no ground troops and only a few navy personnel, but allows more than 20,000 U.S. troops to be outfitted with heavy weapons at a short notice, the paper said. Additional U.S. warplanes were also sent to Bahrain and Kuwait last year and a military exercise in Kuwait was extended. The 18 F-16 jets sent to Bahrain in the autumn have since returned to the United States, the paper said. Diplomats and military officials said the latest movement reflected the unease of U.S. commanders troubled by reports of renewed Iraqi military capability by defence analysts last October, the Times said.

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Kabariti, Saud exchange views

AMMAN (Petra) — Foreign Minister Abdul Karim Al Kabariti and his Saudi counterpart Prince Saud Al Faisal on Tuesday exchanged views by telephone on regional and bilateral issues discussed during the Saudi foreign minister's visit to Jordan early this month.

Death penalty sought for religious sect

BEIRUT (AFP) — Lebanon's state prosecutor on Tuesday asked for the death sentence against a Palestinian sect leader and 20 of his followers accused of murdering a Lebanese cleric and undermining state security. Abdul Karim Al Saïda, also known as Abu Mahjan, two other Palestinians and three Lebanese are accused of killing Sheikh Nizar Halabi, a pro-Syrian fundamentalist, last August. Prosecutor Adnan Addum asked for the death sentence to be passed against the six, who are all behind bars except for Abu Mahjan who is holed up in a refugee camp in South Lebanon. Mr. Addum asked for the same sentence against 15 other Palestinian and Lebanese followers accused of undermining state security and "inciting religious conflicts" on Abu Mahjan's orders. Four are on the run. Abu Mahjan heads a religious group called Usbat Al Ansa.

Egypt to export light bulbs to Iraq

CAIRO (AFP) — The United Nations has given Egypt the go-ahead to export \$2.2 million worth of light bulbs to sanctions-hit Iraq, a Foreign Ministry official said Tuesday. Sayed Kassim Al Masri said Egypt had already sent food and medicine to Iraq under similar exemptions to the U.N. embargo. "Sanctions imposed on governments are designed to pressure them into applying U.N. resolutions and not to put pressure on the people," the official said.

Freed hostages leave Yemen

SANAA (R) — Seventeen French tourists freed on Monday after being held hostage for five days by Yemeni tribesmen left Sanaa early Tuesday on their way back to France, an airport official said on Tuesday. "The French tourists left Sanaa via Frankfurt at 2:30 local time (2330 GMT)," he told Reuters. Officials said earlier the freed hostages, including 13 women, appeared to be in good health and were well-treated during their ordeal.

Buchanan wins Alaska poll; Dole in third

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Arch-conservative television commentator Pat Buchanan has won a non-binding contest of Republican presidential hopefuls in the U.S. state of Alaska, dealing another blow to leading candidate Bob Dole. Mr. Buchanan got 33 per cent of the vote, followed by millionaire publisher Steve Forbes with 31 per cent. Mr. Dole, a U.S. senator, came in a distant third with 17 per cent. Though still considered the frontrunner, Mr. Dole — leader of the Senate's Republican majority — has been losing ground in several key polls nationwide.

14 killed in Algerian violence

ALGIERS (AFP) — Suspected Islamic fundamentalists have killed at least 14 people, including seven women, a girl and a senior army officer, in the latest attacks in Algeria, according to press reports Thursday. The recent murders follow a wave of massacres of civilians at the beginning of Jan. 21 of the fasting month of Ramadan, which extremists purport to be an auspicious time for their "holy war" against the secular authorities.

Israel sees no breakthrough with Syria in Wye meeting

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — Foreign Minister Ehud Barak said Israel did not expect any sudden breakthroughs in peace talks with Syria resuming on Tuesday.

"The mere fact there is progress must be received with satisfaction," Mr. Barak told reporters. But he said: "There's no expectation of fast breakthroughs."

U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher was to intervene in the negotiations near Washington on Tuesday to try to speed their pace, U.S. officials said.

Mr. Christopher's previous visit last week to the U.S.-mediated talks offered what the State Department called "substantive ideas." It did not elaborate.

Comments from both Israel and Syria suggested major gaps remained in the talks on a proposed Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights.

The talks have been bogged down for more than four years over the extent and speed of an Israeli withdrawal from the Golan, the type of security arrangements to guarantee the new border and the nature of future ties between the two countries.

Mr. Christopher is due to meet Israeli and Syrian leaders in the region next week.

Mr. Christopher was scheduled to have dinner with the delegations to both countries and the U.S. mediators at the sprawling Wye Plantation, about two hours outside Washington, State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns said Monday.

The talks were expected to end Wednesday afternoon.

Mr. Christopher said when the talks resumed last week that nothing spectacular should be expected from this round of negotiations.

If there was any progress, he said, it would not come to light until his Middle East tour.

If there is no groundbreaking progress at the talks, political analysts expect the Israeli government to call for early elections in June, freezing the peace talks until the vote.

Recent comments from both sides show they are not budging from their positions. Mr. Barak on Monday called the talks "long and detailed" negotiations with their "ups and downs." The official Syrian press repeated the Syrian demand that Israel return the Golan Heights.

Damascus Radio said Tuesday Syrian and Israeli peace negotiators meeting in the United States had failed to overcome their differences on future security arrangements for the Golan.

"It is clear there are differences in the Syrian and Israeli position on security, because the Israelis in Washington are trying to avoid the principle of equality and set prohibitive conditions for Syria," it said.

"Israel's acceptance of equal and balanced security arrangements will bring progress in the peace process," Damascus Radio said.

Damascus Radio also criticized

(Continued on page 7)

Israeli soldier is stabbed to death

JENIN (Agencies) — A Palestinian student stabbed an Israeli soldier to death inside an army liaison office near this Palestinian-controlled town on Tuesday, drawing sharp protests from Israel.

Army officials said a 19-year-old Palestinian passed through metal detectors set up in the military liaison office without the machine raising the alarm over two knives he was carrying.

Once inside the station the man stabbed First Sergeant Ehud Tal, 22, in the back and chest, fatally wounding him. The attacker was immediately arrested and told police he had acted out of personal frustration caused by "family and financial problems."

Tal was flown by helicopter to a nearby Israeli hospital but died on the way, the army said.

The army identified the attacker as Mahmoud Sirieh, a member of the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas), who lived in a refugee camp near Jenin and had already served time in Israeli jails.

The killing drew sharp protests from senior Israeli officials who blamed the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) for not taking tough enough action against extremists and warned that such attacks could damage the peace process.

General Oren Shahor, coordinator of Israeli activities in the Palestinian territories, lodged a protest over the killing with his Palestinian counterpart, Jamil Tarifi, saying Israel held the PNA responsible, Israel Radio reported.

Israel has handed over Gaza and parts of the West Bank, including seven towns and hundreds of villages, under self-rule peace deals with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO).

A West Bank settlers lead-

er, Arye Ofri, complained Israelis were poorly protected from Palestinian attacks.

"It must be clear that it's impossible to create a situation where the daily routine is halted. We won't allow it," he told army radio.

"If we cannot travel in Jenin, then they cannot travel in other places. They must understand the game here is a two-sided agreement."

Some 140,000 Jews live in settlements scattered throughout the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The fate of the settlers is due to be determined in final-status Israeli-PLO peace talks beginning in May.

Housing Minister Benjamin Ben-Eliezer said the attack "is exactly what might bring the whole peace process crashing down."

"The PNA has to open its eyes and take all sorts of measures to stop the terrorists," he told Israel radio, warning that Israel reserved the right "to hit anywhere, anytime, when we think Palestinian guerrillas will act."

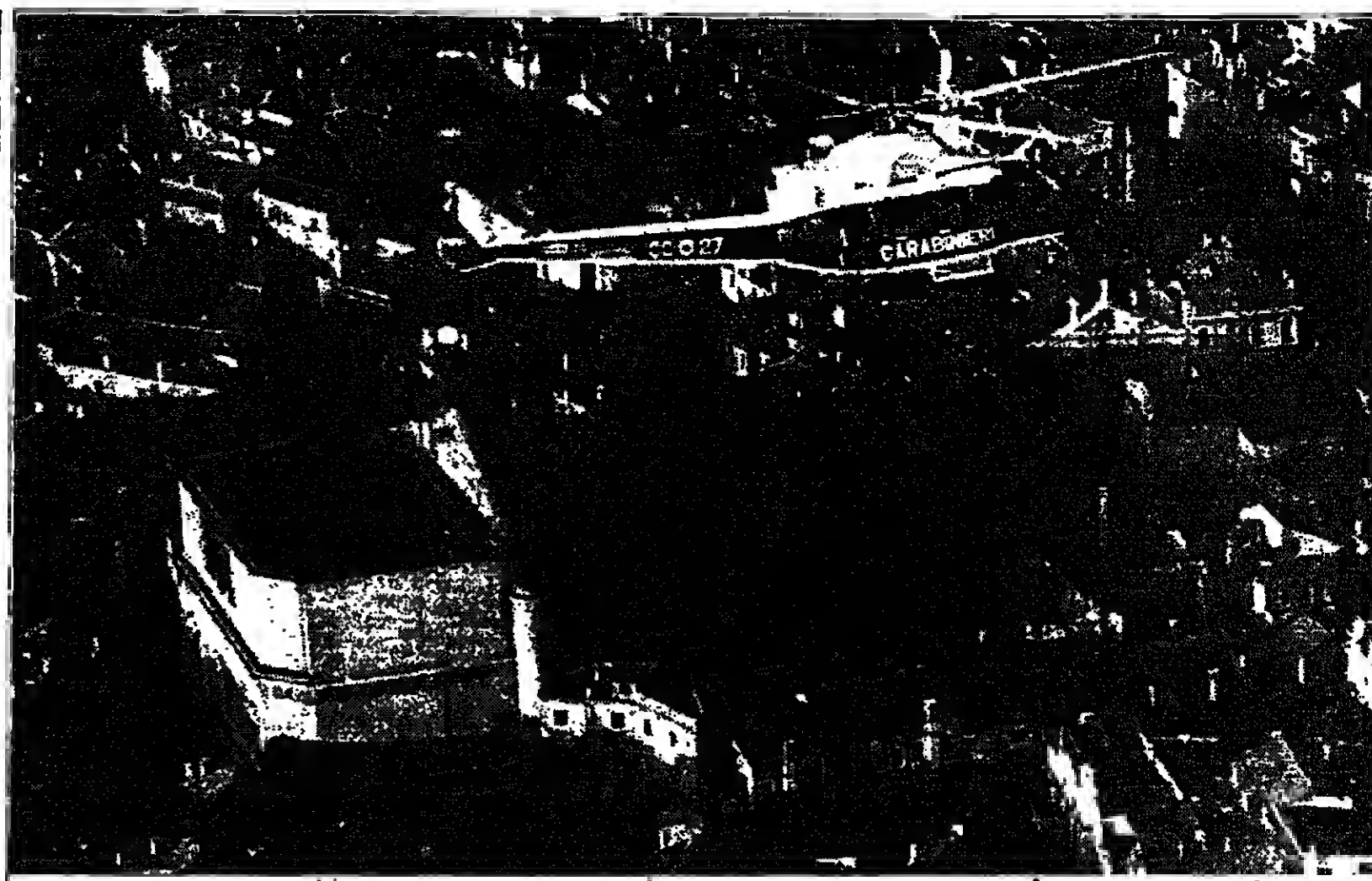
Foreign Minister Ehud Barak, a former army chief of staff, also reacted, pledging more will be done to protect Israeli soldiers in the territories.

The Israeli officials also expressed anger over a separate incident earlier Tuesday in which Palestinian police detained an armed Jewish settler near the West Bank town of Ramallah.

Israeli police said a reserve army officer living in Ofra settlement was driving in an area under PNA control when he was stopped by police who confiscated his M-16 automatic rifle and took him to a Ramallah police station.

Israeli authorities intervened and the settler was eventually released.

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BLAZE IN VENICE: The world famous opera house in Venice smoulders on Tuesday following a blaze that reduced the building to a hulk. The blaze marks the second in its history. It had burnt to the ground in 1936, but was rebuilt later and staged the opening night of many of Verdi's operas such as "La Traviata" (Reuters photo)

Iraq, U.N. to leave thorny matters to last in oil talks

BAGHDAD (Agencies) — Iraq and the United Nations will discuss the technical aspects of an oil-for-food deal when they begin talks next week, leaving thorny political issues until later, diplomats said here Tuesday.

The United Nations announced Monday that the talks on easing the effects of almost six years of oil and trade sanctions on the Iraqi people would open in New York on Feb. 6.

The official Iraqi press announced the news in large headlines on Tuesday but without commentary about the negotiations, which lowered world oil prices and food prices in Baghdad after they were first agreed on almost two weeks ago.

Under U.N. resolution 986 which was adopted in April last year, Baghdad could export up to \$1 billion of oil per quarter in exchange for food and medicine under strict international control.

Diplomats said the technical talks will focus on how the oil will be delivered to cus-

tomers, how much will be exported daily, and how the U.N. escrow account managing the proceeds of the sales will run.

It will only be at a later stage that the two sides will tackle the issues which Iraq has denounced as an infringement of its sovereignty and which prompted it to reject the resolution, the diplomats said.

The U.N. delegation to the talks next week is to be headed by U.N. chief legal counsel Hans Corell, while the Iraqi team will be led by Abdul Amir Al Anbari, Iraq's ambassador to the U.N. Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and Iraq's former permanent representative at the United Nations.

But diplomats here said Deputy Prime Minister Tareq Aziz, who has held most discussions with the U.N., could head the Iraqi side at the later round.

Iraq's economy has been devastated by sanctions imposed by the Security Council

in August 1990, after Iraqi troops marched into Kuwait, and there have been mounting reports of hunger.

But Baghdad has hitherto rejected the oil-for-food plan, and a similar one first offered in late 1991, on the grounds that the required U.N. monitoring of any oil sales and of the distribution of supplies bought with the proceeds would infringe on its sovereignty.

The United Nations and Iraq held several rounds of talks on the earlier oil-for-food scheme in 1992 and 1993, but without result.

The United Nations did not say how long the new talks would last. But U.N. spokeswoman Sylvania Foa told reporters last week they would be "incredibly technical and therefore incredibly difficult... it is going to take time and the solution is not going to be easy."

Under Resolution 986, oil contracts would have to be approved by the Security

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Alarm over Bahrain mounts in S. Arabia

DUBAI (Agencies) — Saudi Arabia, eyeing unrest in neighbouring Bahrain with mounting concern has condemned acts of sabotage in the small Gulf island state as a desperate attempt to undermine regional security.

Crown Prince Abdullah, regent since the beginning of the year when King Fahd handed over the affairs of state while he recovers from a stroke, said late on Monday the disturbances in Bahrain were "strange to our societies and a desperate attempt to destroy Arab and regional security and stability."

Speaking in Riyadh at the weekly cabinet meeting which he chairs, he "reiterated the (Saudi) stance supporting Bahrain in confronting sabotage plans and those aiming at instigating unrest," the official Saudi Press Agency (SPA) said.

The prince's remarks were his first publicly reported comments on foreign policy since the Jan. 1 handover.

A Qatari newspaper meanwhile urged Bahrain to free political prisoners and start a "serious" dialogue to defuse the unrest.

"Bahrainis should take advantage of the Holy Month of Ramadan to break down the wall which separates them and start a serious poli-

tical dialogue," the official Al Watan newspaper said.

It urged the authorities to "release political prisoners and establish a climate of confidence."

"Amnesty International's call in support of the political prisoners in Bahrain came at the right time and it is wrong to believe that a decision to free prisoners would be a concession," Watan said.

In a statement from London on Monday, Amnesty called on the Bahraini government to free immediately political prisoners arrested since the start of the month.

Amnesty, which wrote to the government on Jan. 23, said "it is appalling that these demonstrators have been arrested" after clashes with security forces "simply for expressing their political opinions."

A spokesman for Bahrain's Interior Ministry admitted Saturday that 180 people had been arrested since the beginning of January due to the new wave of violence.

Violence erupted in December 1994 after the authorities arrested a Shiite Muslim cleric who demanded political reform and the restoration of parliament suspended in 1975.

At least 13 people were

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Israeli jets raid S. Lebanon

SIDON (Agencies) — Israeli warplanes staged a series of air strikes on suspected Hizbollah targets in South Lebanon on Tuesday for the first time this year, police said.

The raids were an apparent reprisal for a car bomb attack the previous day in the Israeli-controlled "security zone" of South Lebanon which caused damage but no casualties. Israel blamed Hizbollah for the attack.

Two warplanes fired more than 10 air-to-ground missiles in three separate raids at Jabal Al Rafih and Milita in the Iqlim Al Tufah, a Hizbollah stronghold east of the port city of Sidon, the police said.

Hizbollah sources said, however, that the Israeli jets attacked the Iqlim Al Tufah five times in an hour.

There was no immediate report of casualties but columns of black smoke rose from the site.

Lebanese army troops and Hizbollah guerrillas fired anti-aircraft guns at the planes, which released heat-emitting balloons to escape attack from the ground.

An Israeli army spokesman confirmed the air raids and said they targeted "oper-

(Continued on page 7)

Bosnians remove heavy arms; PoW row rumbles on

SARAJEVO (Agencies) — Bosnia's rival factions were to start removing heavy weapons from the Sarajevo area (FOR officials said Tuesday, as the former belligerents engaged in mutual recrimination over the detention of scores of prisoners.

The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO)-led peace Implementation Force (IFOR) in Bosnia said Serb tanks would roll through government-held districts of Sarajevo on Tuesday and Wednesday as part of the pullout, while Bosnian government army weapons were scheduled for withdrawal Thursday.

All sides have until midnight (2300 GMT) Saturday to withdraw heavy weapons from zones due to be exchanged under a territory swap provided for in the U.S.-brokered Dayton peace accords for Bosnia.

The deadline will coincide with a first visit to Bosnia by U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher, amid continued U.S. pressure on all parties to comply with the letter of Dayton or be shut out of reconstruction aid.

State Department spokes-

man Nicholas Burns said in Washington overnight that "if they (prisoners) haven't been released by Friday... it's going to be very difficult for the United States to engage in equipping and training the Bosnian military down the road in the next couple of months."

In Zagreb, IFOR spokesman Colonel Konrad Freytag said a Serb convoy of "at least nine Serbian tanks will cross today (Tuesday) and tomorrow on their way to Pale."

"To move from one location to another one they have to cross the city," he said, adding "the tanks are coming probably from south of Sarajevo, probably from Grahovica."

The most sensitive areas concerned will be the Ilidza, Grahovica and Vogosca suburbs of Sarajevo, due to return to the Muslim-Croat federation from the Serbs. Elsewhere Mrkonjic Grad and Sijepovo will revert to Serb control.

A row was brewing over the status of government army weapons. IFOR insist-

(Continued on page 7)

ROYAL JORDANIAN

Announcement

Royal Jordanian has the pleasure to announce the introduction of a new service the "Advance Boarding Pass" at its Intercon. Housing Bank and Abdali offices. It is also available at its offices in Zarka and Irbid.

This "ABP" service allows RJ passengers to receive their Boarding Passes, seat assignments and pay their Airport Tax at RJ offices within (24) hours and until (3) hours prior to departure time.

This service applies to the following destinations: New York, Chicago, London, Berlin, Frankfurt and Amsterdam.

Israel is seeking American military secrets - Pentagon

WASHINGTON (AFP) — A Pentagon memorandum has accused Israel of using American Jews to steal U.S. military and intelligence secrets, drawing charges of anti-Semitism from Jewish rights groups and a denial from Israel on Tuesday.

The confidential memorandum, first revealed in the Jewish weekly Moment and carried in fuller detail Tuesday in the Washington Post, alerted military contractors to the dangers of attempted spying by "military friends," such as Israel, France, Italy, Japan, Germany and Britain.

Focusing on Israel, the document said the Jewish state "aggressively collects military and industrial technology," including spy satellite data, missile defence information and data on military aircraft, tanks, missile boats, and radars.

Israel's recruitment techniques, the memo said, included "ethnic targeting, financial aggrandisement, and identification and exploitation of individual frailties" of U.S. citizens.

"Placing Israeli nationals in key industries... is a technique utilised with great success," the memo said.

It alleged that Israel stole secret information from an Illinois optics firm in 1986 and test equipment for a radar system in the mid-1980s. It also repeated unsubstantiated charges that Israel was providing China with sensitive U.S. fighter jet technology.

A senior Israeli official on Tuesday rejected the memo, which he said was simply another consequence of the case of U.S. Navy analyst Jonathan Pollard, who is serving a life sentence in an American prison for spying for Israel.

"Israel is not spying on the United States, and that's it," said the official, who spoke on condition that he not be identified.

"The memo is just another consequence of the Pollard affair," he said.

Leaks of the memorandum coincided with a new Israeli initiative to gain the release of Mr. Pollard, who was arrested in 1985 and sentenced to life for treason two years later.

Last week Israel issued a passport and citizenship certificate for Mr. Pollard, but U.S. authorities maintained their refusal to grant him an

early release. The Washington Post said the Pentagon memo was circulated in October to U.S. military contractors by the Defence Investigative Service, but was withdrawn two months later because it singled out Jewish "ethnicity" as a counterintelligence concern.

The document nevertheless prompted an angry protest from the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, a prominent Jewish organisation whose director Abraham Foxman sent a letter to Defence Secretary William Perry.

"This is a distressing charge which impugns American Jews and borders on anti-Semitism," Mr. Foxman said in his letter.

Assistant Secretary of Defence Emmet Paige said the document did not reflect the official position of the defence department.

Mr. Paige said that singling out ethnicity as a matter of counterintelligence vulnerability was "particularly repugnant" to the department, whose personnel had been instructed "that similar documents will not be produced in the future."

Disarray deepens in Rabin murder trial as court-appointed lawyer quits

TEL AVIV (AFP) — The troubled murder trial of Yigal Amir, confessed assassin of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, slipped further into disarray Tuesday when a court-appointed defence lawyer quit after less than 24 hours on the case.

Attorney Avraham Wachter said he could not defend Amir, a 25-year-old Jewish nationalist who has admitted killing Mr. Rabin to halt the Palestinian peace process, because the defendant insists on building a political defence of his actions.

"I spoke with the accused for less than an hour and he explained that he wanted to present an ideological case for his defence," Mr. Wachter, a former district attorney, told Israel Radio.

Mr. Wachter noted that since testimony began in the trial on Sunday, Amir, a third-year law student, has taken to interrogating witnesses himself while his U.S.-trained lawyer Jonathan Goldberg remained largely silent.

"You can't defend someone who thinks he knows the legal profession better than his own attorney," Mr. Wachter said. "He doesn't want anyone to think he acted in a moment of insanity. He only wants to justify his act by ideological arguments."

While he bickered, Amir made an impromptu declaration to the court admitting that he killed Mr. Rabin but saying he had only wanted to paralyse the prime minister and end his political career.

Mr. Wachter's appointment and quick resignation was only the latest in a series of incidents to disrupt Amir's trial, which held its fourth session Monday and is to resume on Thursday.

A second defence lawyer resigned on Sunday in a public dispute with Mr. Goldberg, a right-wing settler from the West Bank, over how to proceed.

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Ethiopia slams Israel over Ethiopian Jews

ADDIS ABABA (R) — The Ethiopian government has summoned the Israeli ambassador in Addis Ababa and expressed "deep concern" over the treatment of Ethiopian Jews.

An official statement said Foreign Minister Seyoum Mesfin called in Ambassador Avi Gnanot late on Monday and requested further clarification on "the matter that triggered the demonstration by the Ethiopian Jews in Jerusalem on Sunday."

Thousands of black Jews, secretly airlifted to Israel in the 1980s and 1990s, rioted in West Jerusalem on Sunday after learning Israel's blood banks were routinely discarding their donations for fear of AIDS.

"The minister voiced deep concern over the issue and asked for further clarification on the matter," the statement said.

The Ethiopia News Agency (ENA) said the Israeli ambassador expressed "the sadness felt by his government over the incident."

"The ambassador also confirmed that Israel has already started taking action with the view to eliminate the

causes underlying the incident," ENA added.

News that Israeli health authorities at the blood bank were routinely discarding blood donated by Ethiopian Jews had been received with consternation and dismay in Addis Ababa.

"How can all blood donated by the Ethiopian Jews become tainted with the HIV virus? This smacks of racism than anything else," said a young man in an Addis Ababa street.

HIV leads to full-blown acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) for which a cure has not been discovered. Africa leads the world in the number of HIV and AIDS cases.

On Sunday, Ethiopian Jews demonstrated outside the offices of Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres against the policy.

Mr. Gnanot said on Monday the uproar could strain relations with African countries just as Israel hoped to persuade the organisation of African Unity (OAU) to cancel a decision equating Zionism — the belief in a Jewish state — with racism.

Singapore names Israel envoy

SINGAPORE (AFP) — Singapore announced Tuesday that it was appointing its first ambassador to Israel amid thawing relations between the city state's large Muslim neighbours and Tel Aviv, which has forged peace with Palestinians.

A terse statement from Singapore's Foreign Ministry said the government had appointed Foo Meng Tong, 54, as its first ambassador to Israel. He will be presenting his credentials to President Ezer Weizman on Thursday.

Singapore had delayed appointing an ambassador to Israel, which had an envoy here since the early days of the city state. It also did not have any roving or non-resident ambassador for Israel.

"The move to appoint an ambassador now is a positive move ahead. Although it was only Israel which had an ambassador, our ties with Singapore in every aspect — trade, culture and politics — had been very good," Israel Ambassador Daniel Megiddo told AFP.

The Singapore announcement came nearly two weeks after its neighbour, predominantly Muslim Malaysia, said it would look into the possibility of opening up more trade links with Israel in stages.

Russian flotilla visits Syria

DAMASCUS (R) — A Russian flotilla of 10 warships, commanded by a senior Russian naval officer, have docked at two Syrian ports on a goodwill visit to Moscow's former close ally.

Admiral Igor Kasatonov, first deputy commander-in-chief of the Russian navy, told a news conference in Damascus on Monday the vessels carrying 3,500 mariners, docked on Sunday at the Mediterranean ports of Latakia and Tartus.

The group, from Russia's northern fleet's base of Severomorsk, include the aircraft carrier Admiral Kuznetsov, the destroyer Bezrashnyy, and the frigate Pylyk. Russia's ITAR-TASS news agency said.

"We want to confirm our presence in the Mediterranean which dates back to tens of years," Adm. Kasatonov said.

"We want also to express our desire to promote cooperation with countries which existed a long time ago and with those who made new offers to develop cooperation."

The admiral said the visit was a goodwill mission "which is not aimed at showing muscles."

The Soviet Union was Syria's main arms supplier before it broke off into several states led by Russia in 1990.

Ties with socialist Syria which became cool as a result of the collapse of communism began to warm up again after Russia joined the United States in sponsoring Arab-Israeli peace negotiations which opened in Madrid in late 1991.

Adm. Kasatonov said no joint military exercises were planned with the Syrians but added that the current visit had "required big coordination and cooperation on some military combat missions."

"We need for example to coordinate on how to protect the visiting vessels off the Syrian ports and this requires full coordination with the Syrian marine forces," he said.

Adm. Kasatonov said that Syria had welcomed requests to allow a Russian jet fighters to land at its airports in case of emergency.

"We made agreements with some friendly states to facilitate the landing of our jet fighters in an emergency."

NEWS IN BRIEF

Security Council renews UNIFIL mandate

UNITED NATIONS (R) — The Security Council unanimously approved without debate on Monday a six-month renewal, until July 31, of the U.N. Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). The 4,650-member force was sent to southern Lebanon in 1978 to restore the Lebanese government's authority over the south of the country after an Israeli incursion. Israel and its allies of the South Lebanon Army (SLA) militia still control a so-called "security zone" along the Lebanese side of the border. The zone was established in 1985, after the withdrawal of most Israeli troops involved in a 1982 invasion of Lebanon. UNIFIL now comprises contingents from Fiji, Finland, France, Ghana, Ireland, Italy, Nepal, Norway and Poland.

EU sends fact-finder to Cyprus

BRUSSELS (R) — European Union (EU) foreign ministers decided on Monday to send former Italian ambassador to Moscow, Federico Di Roberto, on a fact finding mission to Cyprus. German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel said, He said Mr. Di Roberto's task would be to liaise with the United Nations' representative in the divided country to find out whether the European Union should appoint a special envoy to help the reconciliation process.

Women to join Israel's border guards

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Some 600 women are for the first time to join Israel's border guards, a military arm of the police force, a police spokesman announced Monday. He said a first contingent of 100 young women had already started training on an experimental basis. The 600 recruits would all be volunteers and patrol sectors inside Israel's borders with the Palestinian territories. Israel has around 8,400 border guards.

Israel bans Arab exhibition in Jerusalem

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — Israel said Tuesday it had banned an exhibition of Arab artists in East Jerusalem due to open that evening because it was organised by the Palestinian National Authority (PNA). Internal Security Minister Moshe Shahal told state radio the exhibition at Al Wasati cultural centre "contravened the autonomy accord" between Israel and the Palestinians. State radio reported that Israel was particularly infuriated by news that the outgoing PNA culture minister, Yasser Abed Rabbo, was to attend the exhibition's opening.

Ras Al Khaimah pardons 83 prisoners for Ramadan

ABU DHABI (AFP) — A ruler in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) has pardoned 83 prisoners to mark the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan and the ensuing 'Eid Al Fitr feast, the official news agency WAM reported on Tuesday. Sheikh Sagr Ben Mohammad Al Qassimi, ruler of the northern emirate of Ras Al Khaimah, issued an amnesty for the 83 who have been convicted for various offences and who "have shown good behaviour," the agency said.

Egypt's top actress sues three journalists

CAIRO (AFP) — Egypt's top film star, Yousra, brought three journalists to court here Tuesday on charges of defamation over their reporting of her love tangle with a young married police officer. The 24-year-old officer took Yousra's maid and chauffeur hostage, threatening to kill the actress in a drama played out peacefully on Jan. 14. He is in jail awaiting trial. Sayed Ali, Essam Al Meigui and Hanan Bakri stand accused of insulting and defaming Yousra, under a controversial press law introduced last May that can jail journalists for up to 15 years. The court decided to release the three journalist without bail but they can be called to appear again, legal sources said.

Egypt drops sentence against Kuwaiti editor

CAIRO (AFP) — An Egyptian court overturned on Tuesday a verdict against the editor of a leading Kuwaiti newspaper condemning him to two years in jail for accusing a Egyptian television presenter of drugs smuggling. The editor of Al Siyassa daily, Ahmad Al Jarallah, was sentenced in absentia and fined \$60 in June when the presenter, Nagwa Ibrahim, sued for defamation. Al Siyassa had printed a Syrian news agency report accusing Mr. Ibrahim, a well-known face on Egyptian television, of being involved in a drug trafficking scandal. But the state prosecutor's office here appealed against the verdict on a legal loophole. Mr. Jarallah is known for his pro-Egyptian articles and regularly interviewing President Hosni Mubarak.

Britain to launch Gulf syndrome probe

LONDON (R) — Britain's Defence Ministry, accused of failing to take seriously the suffering of Gulf war veterans, will announce on Tuesday it is launching an official study into so-called Gulf war syndrome. A Defence Ministry spokesman confirmed that news of the probe would be given in a written parliamentary answer later on Tuesday. He declined to give details. Media reports said the Defence Ministry was expected to announce an inquiry into deformities among the children of servicemen who served in the 1991 Gulf war against Iraq. Veterans say a "cocktail" of immunisations to protect them against chemical and biological warfare was the likely cause of their symptoms, which include chronic fatigue, asthma and skin complaints. Some veterans are confined to wheelchairs. More than 70 veterans also claim a link between the immunisation programme and limb defects, heart deformities and other deformities in their children.

Diaspora Palestinians urged to work with self-rule areas

WASHINGTON (USIA) — Palestinians in diaspora, estimated to number a few million, were counselled by a prominent Palestinian woman intellectual who teaches at Durham University in England, to "work with the present arrangement" reached by Israel and the Palestine National Authority in two interim peace agreements and try to "build on what has been gained."

Dr. Ghada Karmi, a fellow at the Centre of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies, was the lead speaker at a symposium on "The Palestinian Elections and the Future of Palestine" sponsored by the Centre for Policy Analysis on Palestine and held at Georgetown University.

In her view, the diaspora Palestinians must resist the temptation of either rejecting the peace accords or trying to create an alternative. "It is too late for that," she insisted.

Stressing that these Palestinians, whom she described as "bewildered" by the agreements, "have no other viable option" in the wake of what she saw as the ultimate "destruction of the Palestine Liberation Organisation and the Palestine National Council," or the Palestinian parliament, as a result of the Oslo peace accord.

Her fear stemmed from her

view that the final status talks, due to start in May, may be conducted "without diaspora representation."

If this is so, she cautioned, then the Palestinian diaspora may look to a future not dissimilar from that of the Armenians, "odd groups dispersed in many countries of the world, still speaking their language and entertaining dreams of a mythical future which will reverse the past."

"It seems to me that the diaspora has no viable option now but to work with the present arrangement in the (self-rule) territories and try to build on what has been gained," she stated.

To a certain extent this has already begun, she pointed out, to have "with the subventions and investments in the self-rule areas from major Palestinian financiers in the diaspora." She expressed hope that this would also include "offering expertise, skills and technology, all supposing that there was the organisation and willingness from those inside to take them up."

She said the role of the diaspora Palestinians could in fact resemble the "non-Israeli Jews who work to support Israel from the outside."

However, she added, the Palestinian process must not stop here. Rather, she con-

tinued, "it must consciously develop itself once again into a national movement, designed to impress its point of view on the agenda of the coming negotiations."

Dr. Karmi cautioned against pitting the "inside" Palestinians against the "outside" Palestinians. Rather, she continued, both should work together to rebuild the PLO and the PNC, "but with an altered brief to take account of the new realities," meaning the negotiated peace accords.

The new strategy that must be attained by the two Palestinian sides, she continued, should aim at ensuring that national rights and principles are not bargained away in the pursuit of temporary political gains.

She cited Jerusalem and the right of return as issues "crucial for the whole Palestinian people" which should be on the agenda of the final status talks.

The time is short, she added. "Unless (the Palestinians) grasp the nettle now, they might find themselves without a solution and without a cause."

Dr. Karmi concluded, "the only realistic choice now is to exploit to advantage what has happened. To do otherwise will do nothing to counter the damage already done."

Moroccan group decries arrests

RABAT (R) — A Moroccan human rights group has published an open letter to Prime Minister Abdul Latif Filali alleging serious human rights violations including torture of suspects arrested in a crackdown against smugglers.

The government said last week that 245 people had been arrested in nationwide raids against suspected drug smugglers. Human Rights Minister Mohammed Ziyane resigned last week after attacking the government's tactics as "collective lynching."

The president of the organisation Marocaine des

Droits de L'Homme (OMDH), Abdul Aziz Benani, cited in the letter "very grave" abuses reported by lawyers and by the media.

"Acts of physical torture have been committed during interrogation of suspects. In some cases where extreme physical violence was used. Medical care was denied," the letter said.

Some suspects were brought to court without being allowed access to legal representation while lawyers complained that they were not allowed to visit suspects in detention, it said.

This made it difficult for

lawyers to prove in court that their clients were subjected to torture, the letter added.

OMDH is one of the country's three main independent human rights groups.

"These actions constitute a serious threat to justice and violate all international conventions on human rights," the letter said.

It added that in the absence of a coherent policy by the government on human rights issues, the minister of interior, who heads the campaign against smuggling, as well as the justice minister and the prime minister should take responsibility.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

JORDAN TELEVISION	
Tel: 773111-19	
PROGRAMME TWO	
14:00	The Flintstones
14:30	Speed Racer
15:00	Doc — Islamic History in Jordan
15:30	Amazing Stories
16:00	Voyagers
17:00	Sophie et Virginie
17:30	Serie — Le Cinq Derniers Minutes
18:00	Le Journal
19:15	Magazine — Sports Et Musique
19:30	News Headlines
19:35	Comedy — Evening Shade
20:00	Doc — Oriental Rugs
20:25	Hawai Five — O
21:18	Documentary — Horizon Too Big
22:00	News in English
22:25	Drama — Airwolf
23:20	The Silk Road
00:30	Second Thoughts
PRAYER TIMES	
05:07	Fajr
06:26	(Sunrise) Dhuhr
11:49	Dhuhr
14:32	Asr
17:12	Maghrib
18:31	Isha
CHURCHES	
St. Mary of Nazareth Church, Smithfield, Tel. 810740	
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 637285	
St. Joseph Church, Tel. 624590, Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440	
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757	
Terrasanta Church Tel. 622366	
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541	
Anglican Church Tel. 652826	
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331	
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 773261	
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751	
Assam International Church Tel. 625256	
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328	
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 845497	
The Latin-Day Saints Tel. 654932	
Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691	
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295	
WEATHER	
Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.	
Temperatures are expected to rise further with clouds appearing at different altitudes and south-westerly moderate.	
In Amman, it will be sunny with winds northerly moderate and seas calm.	
Min/Max. temp.	Amman 17/20

JORDAN TIMES DAILY C

Aqaba	13 / 24
Deserts	5 / 20
Jordan Valley	12 / 23

Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 19 Aqaba 22. Humidity
readings: Amman 37 per cent,
Aqaba 28 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:

Dr. Bassam Karadshch	759230
Dr. Mukhlis Halasa	819220
Dr. Arafat Al Ashhab	625570
Dr. Abdul Wahab Awad	846070
Firas pharmacy	661912
Fordows pharmacy	778336
Al Asena pharmacy	637055
Nairoukh pharmacy	623672
Al Solam pharmacy	636791
Yacoub pharmacy	649485
Shmiciani pharmacy	637661
Nairoukh pharmacy	623672
Najih pharmacy	847632

IRBID:

Dr. Ahmad Qanu	281741
Al Oudh pharmacy	(—)

ZARQA:

Dr. Abdul Karim Khushashneh	983023
Khalifah pharmacy	985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre	637111
Civil Defence Department	661111
Rescue	630341
Civil Defence Emergency	199
Rescue Police	192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade	671011
Blood Bank	775121
Highway Police	843402
Traffic Police	896390
Public Security Department	630321
Hotel Complaints	603800
Price Complaints	661176
Water and Sewerage	877467
Complaints	877467
Amman Municipality	787111
Complaints	787111
Telephone Information	(directory assistance)
Overseas Calls	01230
Central Amman Telephone	623101
Repairs	623101
Abdull Telephone Repairs	661911
Jordan Television	773111
Radio Jordan	774111
Water Authority	680100
Jordan Electricity Authority	815615
Electric Power	Company
Company	636381
RJ Flight Information	(8-5320)
Queen Alia Intl. Airport	(8-5320)

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:

Husseini Medical Centre	813813/32
Khalid Maternity, J. Amn.	642816
Akil Maternity, J. Amn.	642412
Jabal Amman Maternity	642362
Malbas, J. Amman	636140
Palestine, Shmiciani	630701
Shmiciani Hospital	669131
University Hospital	845845
Al-Musash Hospital	667277
The Islamic, Abdull	661277
Al-Ami, Abdull	661646
Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh	77111/26
Army 3 Marks	891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital	6024951
Amal Hospital	674155
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery	865199

ZARQA:

Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09	
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A SPECIAL IFTAR: Her Majesty Queen Noor, accompanied by her daughters Princesses Iman and Rayah, Tuesday hosts an iftar at Al Hussein Sports City for nearly 400 children from the Ministry of Social Development's orphanages located throughout the Kingdom. The Queen chatted with the children during the iftar and sent presents to those who were too young to attend. Minister of Social Development Salwa Damen-Masri and Advisor to the Queen In'am Mufti attended the iftar (photo by Crystal)

Prince Abdullah turns 34

AMMAN (Petra) — HRH Prince Abdullah, the eldest son of His Majesty King Hussein, Tuesday turned 34.

Born in Amman on Jan. 30, 1962, Prince Abdullah attended the Islamic Educational School in Amman until 1966 then transferred to St. Edmund's School in Surrey, England.

Later, the Prince attended and graduated from Deerfield Academy in the United States.

Prince Abdullah joined the Royal Academy at Sandhurst in England where he received his military training. He later went to Oxford University for a one-year special course in international politics and world affairs.

Prince Abdullah attended the School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C. between Aug. 1987 and May 1988.

Serving with the Jordan Armed Forces he was promoted to full colonel in 1993 and is currently the commander of the Special Forces.

Prince Abdullah has participated in several training courses in artillery and various small arms, and also served with the Special Forces in airborne and anti-terrorist training operations.

Qualified as a parachutist from both the British and French armed forces, Prince Abdullah is skilled in free-fall parachuting and is a qualified pilot.

Apart from the military service, Prince Abdullah has served as Regent several times during periods when King Hussein was abroad.

On June 10, 1993 Prince Abdullah was married to HRH Princess Rania. The couple's son, Prince Hussein Ben Abdullah, will



UAE envoy, commerce leader look into expanding trade ties

AMO releases 95 agricultural export figures

AMMAN (Petra) — United Arab Emirates (UAE) Ambassador to Jordan Ahmad Zuabi Tuesday said his country's Chamber of Commerce was eager to cooperate with the Federation of Jordanian Chambers of Commerce (FJCC) in the exchange of trade-related information and in organizing trade fairs in each country.

Speaking at a meeting with FJCC chairman Haidar Murdad, the ambassador said the UAE embassy will work to facilitate visits by Jordanian businessmen and merchants to his country to discuss trade and economic cooperation.

For his part, Mr. Murdad

reviewed the federation's economic and trade activities which he said are steadily increasing with Arab and foreign countries.

He attributed the upswing to the benefits of economic stability and security in the Kingdom, saying such conditions would help to attract investors.

Mr. Murad also briefed the ambassador on the latest Jordanian legislation which aim at promoting investment in the Kingdom by offering numerous incentives to foreign investors.

The FJCC chairman

extended an invitation to the UAE Chamber of Commerce to visit Jordan, examine the investment cli-

mate and look into starting joint ventures with the Jordanian business community.

According to a federation statement, Jordan-UAE trade amounted to JD 23 million in 1995 up from JD 19 million in 1992.

UAE imports 41% of Jordan's produce exports

Tuesday's meeting between the UAE envoy and the federation chairman coincided with the release of 1995 Jordanian agricultural products exports figures which showed that the UAE topped the list of countries importing Jordanian produce. The figures showed that the UAE

imported 41.1 per cent of the Kingdom's total exports of 317,000 tonnes during 1995.

A statement by the Agricultural Marketing Organization (AMO) said exports of vegetables and fruits earned Jordan JD 60 million in 1995; nearly equal to export earnings of 1994.

The AMO said Lebanon, Saudi Arabia and Qatar in addition to several non-Arab countries also import Jordanian produce.

Referring to the Kingdom's own imports of agricultural products the AMO statement said 54,300 tonnes of vegetables and 27,300 tonnes of fruits were imported in 1995.

Arab states urged to use treated wastewater

AMMAN (Petra) — Participants in a five-day workshop held here in December to discuss management of treated wastewater Tuesday issued a statement summing up their recommendations, calling on their governments to improve the quality of treated wastewater through advanced technology.

They suggested applying methods which would take advantage of the treated water and utilise it for irrigation and in industry.

For this to happen, said a statement prepared by the workshop participants, special attention should be given to expanding and promoting the functioning of wastewater treatment plants and stations and to increasing the number of such stations.

The statement underlined the need for low-cost treatment techniques to help the Arab states benefit from the water at the lowest possible cost.

It called for the establishment of a data bank with contributions from the participating countries to provide information on matters related to sanitation, sewerage projects and treatment stations, and to upgrade and intensify public awareness programmes which would target farmers and local communities in the rural regions on the utilisation of the treated water in industrial and agricultural fields.

In addition, the participants urged their governments to intensify research centres' work in the use of treated waste water and to enact unified Arab legislation governing the management and use of treated water as an alternative and important source for providing sufficient supply for different purposes.

The delegates to the workshop represented Iraq, Syria, Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco, in addition to Jordan.

DEF finances JD 5m worth of income generating projects in 1995

AMMAN (Petra) — The Development and Employment Fund (DEF) last year granted JD 5 million in loans to individuals and institutions to finance 1,008 income generating projects in various parts of the Kingdom during 1995, according to DEF Director General Ali Jaddou Kuba'ah.

In an interview with the Jordan News Agency, Petra, Mr. Kuba'ah said DEF's direct and indirect loans to individuals and institutions helped in creating 2,017 job opportunities.

Mr. Kuba'ah said the Fund last year received requests directly from individuals to finance 746 projects worth JD 4,464,924, of which the fund has financed 601 projects worth JD 2,977,134.

Mr. Kuba'ah said DEF has financed 397 projects through such institutions and organisations as the Agricultural Credit Corporation (ACC) and the Queen Alia Fund for Social Development (QAF).

He said that DEF signed a JD 2.25 million agreement for the years 1994/1995 with the ACC to finance agricultural projects targeting the needy and the jobless. The Fund had also signed a JD 1 million biennial agreement with QAF and had also financed 10 projects for voluntary societies at a total value of JD 304,000 in 1995.

On the regional distribution of the Fund's direct and indirect loans, Mr. Kuba'ah said the Kingdom's central regions, which include Amman, Zarqa, Balqa and Madaba

governorates, won the lion's share with 45.5 per cent of the total value of loans granted by DEF, or JD 2,365,000. These loans have contributed to providing 1,019 job opportunities.

The northern parts of the Kingdom, which include Irbid, Mafrq, Ajloun and Jarash governorates, received 35.6 per cent of the total fund loans, or JD 1,528,000. These loans contributed to providing 675 job opportunities.

The southern parts of the country, however, earned 18.9 per cent of the loans, or JD 811,000. They also contributed to providing 323 job opportunities.

Mr. Kuba'ah attributed the low percentage of loans allocated to the southern parts — which include Karak, Maan, Tafleeh and Aqaba — to the relatively low number of applicants for loans, due to the remoteness of the centre from this region and the fear by the people concerned that they might not be able to market their products and thus will not be able to settle their debts to the fund.

On the sectoral distribution of loans, Mr. Kuba'ah said the services sector won the highest share with 46.6 per cent of the total financing value, followed by the industrial sector, which won 31.9 per cent of the total value of loans, the agricultural sector which won 13.7 per cent of the total loans value and then the crafts and tourism sector with 5.9 per cent and 3.4 per cent respectively.

Srouf says recent disputes at House are one form of parliamentary life

AMMAN (Petra) — Lower House of Parliament Speaker Saad Hayel Srouf Tuesday said recent disputes and exchanges of insults at the House were one of the manifestations of parliamentary life.

Commenting on disputes that surfaced during recent House meetings between deputies and the government and between deputies themselves, Mr. Srouf said many people in the world consider such phenomena as healthy in case they stop at "the natural limits that would not lead to permanent crises among deputies."

"When we talk about one or more incidents in which debates become acrimonious, I stress that these debates should remain within the context of a democratic Jordanian parliament whose doors are widely open for all views and ideas no matter how different they are as long as the final decision will be taken by the majority," Mr. Srouf said.

"This is what has distinguished the Jordanian parliament, even when it was debating the most sensitive and controversial issues in the history of the country," he added.

During Sunday's regular session, a fierce dispute between the government and the opposition over division of power between the judiciary and the legislative escalated into uncontrollable personal confrontations.

The dispute started between Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Education Abdul Raouf Al Rawabdeh and Islamic Action Front (IAF) Deputy Abdul Munem Abu Zant. The dispute later developed into a verbal fracas with other deputies joining one of the two sides and some of them exchanging insults.

Among last week's several quarrels, there was one dispute between Deputy Toujan Faisal and the government.

The House speaker told the Jordan News Agency, Petra, in an interview that no matter how acrimonious debates at the house get and no matter how much views differ, democracy "will and should eventually triumph."

These debates which take place in our Jordanian parliament are one of the best democratic open dialogues existing in the most prestigious parliaments in the world, he said.

Syria's Sheikh Sabri Mudallal returns for one more Ramadan performance

By Jean-Claude Elias
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — His performance last year received such acclaim that the National Music Conservatory (NMC) — Noor Al Hussein Foundation, decided to invite Syria's Sheikh Sabri Mudallal again to Amman this year, for a Ramadan entertainment at the Philadelphia Hotel.

Accompanied by singers interpreting traditional Arabic songs and with the famous "Turning Dervish's Ensemble," Sheikh Mudallal's voice will once again fill the hotel's Royal Ballroom on

Thursday night, Feb. 1.

Sabri Mudallal, one of the best known singers of the genre, will interpret chants from religious inspiration (Prophet's Praise) as well as Sufi songs.

Whether singing Aleppo "Kudud," old "Mawashahat," or "Mawawed" (the Arabic equivalent of American Blues music), Sheikh Sabri has become the undisputed master of these styles.

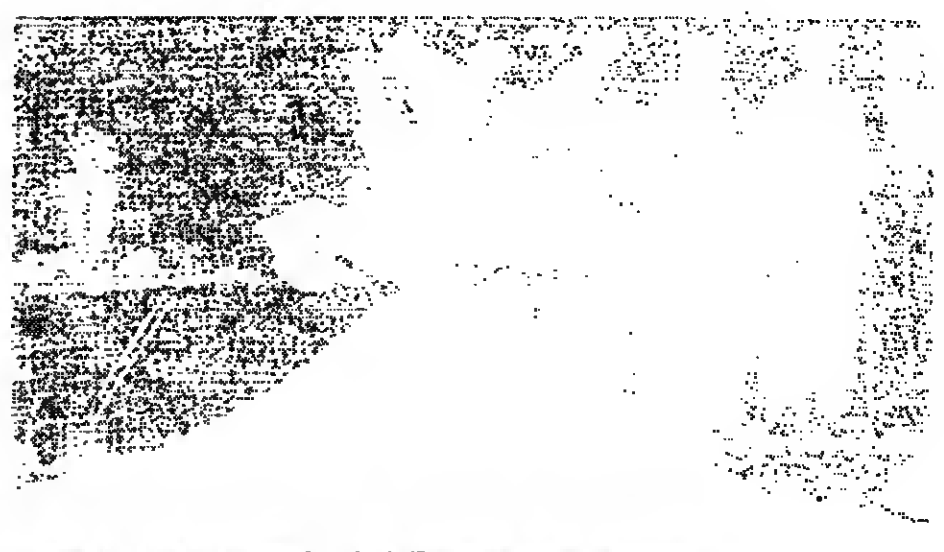
Recognised as an exceptional musical and vocal talent from the early age of 12, he has since toured many countries and given countless performances.

Those familiar with "Ya Mal Es-Sham" or "Ya Shadi El Alhan" will find Sheikh Sabri's interpretation of these traditional aires one of the most musical and authentic that can be heard.

He leaves enough room for improvisation without altering the original spirit of the songs.

Whether taken from the purely musical or from the social point of view, the recital of Sabri Mudallal and his ensemble could not be better set than during the Holy Month of Ramadan.

Presented under the patronage of Her Majesty



A member of the Turning Dervish's Ensemble in performance

Queen Noor, the performance will be followed by a light "Suhur."

WHAT'S GOING ON

CONCERT

* Ramadan recital followed by a subur (light meal) by Syrian Sheikh of chanting Sabri Mudallal and his traditional and dervishes ensemble on Thursday at Philadelphia Hotel at 10:00 p.m. (The programme includes muwashahat, odwar, Aleppo kudud, mawawel, nabawi praises and Sufi songs).

FILMS

* "Spur der Steine," (in German with English subtitles) at Goethe-Institut, Jabal Amman at 8:00 p.m.

* "Le Monde du Silence," at the French Cultural Centre at 3:00 p.m.

LECTURE

* Lecture on the novel entitled "Max und Moritz" (in Arabic and German, with slides and excerpts from the screenplay) at Goethe-Institut at 7:00 p.m.

PLAYS

* "Between Two Jaws," at the Royal Cultural Centre at 8:00 p.m.

* "Ramadan Supermarket" (in Arabic) at the Royal Cultural Centre at 8:00 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

* Photography and paintings of railways and trains at Goethe-Institut (until Jan. 31).

* Printmaking and paintings by Jordanian artist Yasser Dweik at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Luweibdeh. Also displaying paintings and sculptures by contemporary artists (until Feb. 18).

* Contemporary and Traditional Jewellery at the Jordan Design and Trade Centre, Shmeisani (Tel. 699141) (until Jan. 31).

* Plastic (abstract) art exhibition by Jordanian and Iraqi artists at Orfali Art Gallery, Umm Utaina (until Feb. 6).

* Paintings by artist Raphael Chabrol at the French Cultural Centre (until Jan. 31).

* Paintings by Amer Bani Yassin — "A Moment of Dream." At the Housing Bank Complex (until Feb. 5).

Sri Lanka rebels step up attacks

COLOMBO (R) — Sri Lankan Tamil Tiger guerrillas set off a bomb in the country's east Tuesday, keeping up pressure on government forces who suffered heavy casualties the day before, the military and rebels said.

At least one civilian was killed when the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) exploded a bomb at Kalmunai, 40 kilometres south of Batticaloa town early Tuesday morning, military sources in the east said.

Security forces found and defused another rebel bomb at Kalawanchikudi, a few kilometres north of Kalmunai, they said.

"During this last week or so they have increased activity in the east," a military spokesman told Reuters.

Tuesday's incidents came a day after the LTTE, fighting for a homeland for minority Tamils in the island's north and east, overran an army camp and ambushed a police patrol in

the east, killing 13 soldiers and three policemen.

The Ministry of Defence said the guerrillas killed three more soldiers and wounded another when they ambushed a military patrol Sunday at Janakapura in the east.

The LTTE's Voice of Tigers radio, monitored by Reuters in the northern town of Vavuniya, said Tuesday the guerrillas lost eight senior cadres in two of the three attacks, adding that they had inflicted heavy damage on the military.

The radio said guerrillas captured the soldiers' arms and ammunition during their raid on the army camp at Pulmoddai in eastern Trincomalee district.

A military spokesman said security forces had already mounted several limited operations in the east to counter increasing rebel attacks.

"The casualties they have inflicted upon us are not huge and there is no reason for us to be worried at this stage," he said.

The rebels stepped up attacks in the east following the fall of their northern Jaffna stronghold to the army last month. At least 1,000 rebel fighters were reported to have taken refuge in eastern jungles after their defeat at Jaffna.

Police Tuesday published a photograph of the rebels' political chief for the eastern region, Sivagnanam Karikalan, seeking information from the public for his arrest.

"We have information that Karikalan is in Colombo. We want to arrest him here," a senior police officer told Reuters.

Last week Mr. Karikalan told reporters in Batticaloa district that the LTTE would retake Jaffna through guerrilla warfare.

Mr. Karikalan also admitted the rebels shot down an air force helicopter with 39 security personnel on board on Jan. 22 over the northern seas.

The government says more than 50,000 people have died in the 13-year

conflict. Meanwhile the bodies of 19 of the 39 servicemen on board the Sri Lankan Air Force helicopter which went missing over the northern sea last week have been washed ashore, the National News Agency said Tuesday.

"We have found 19 bodies," a military spokesman told Reuters without giving details.

The National News Agency said the International Committee of the Red Cross had told the military that 19 bodies, believed to be those of the missing servicemen, were washed ashore at Kothiwilam, about nine kilometres from Point Pedro where the helicopter disappeared.

Residents of the northern rebel stronghold of Jaffna said Monday that the helicopter was shot down by the Tamil Tiger rebels and that some occupants had been captured, while the others had died.

Adams urges Major to drop N. Ireland election plan

BELFAST (R) — Gerry Adams, head of the IRA's Sinn Féin political arm, urged Britain Tuesday to abandon plans for elections in Northern Ireland and hold long-awaited all-party peace talks instead.

He was speaking ahead of talks called urgently by Northern Ireland Secretary Sir Patrick Mayhew to calm anger over London's surprise plan for elections designed to end a stalemate over whether peace talks should be preceded by guerrilla disarmament.

"The only way to clarify this from the British government's point of view is for (Prime Minister) John Major to publicly retract on the election diversion...and also to publicly drop his preconditions for an IRA

surrender of weapons," Mr. Adams told BBC Radio.

Mr. Major came up with the election idea last week as an alternative path to peace if the Irish Republican Army (IRA) and Protestant extremist guerrillas continue to reject his "arms before talks" policy.

Britain says the guerrillas, who fought for 25 years over the future of British rule, must disarm to cement 18 month-old truces. Both have refused to do so.

Mr. Major provoked fury from the Irish government who said he had not consulted them about the election proposal and was breaching a joint strategy for carrying out peace in the troubled region.

Ireland says Britain

should take up a proposal from a U.S. mediation team for all-party talks alongside gradual arms decommissioning.

Mr. Major rejects Sinn Féin assertions that an election is a tactic to stall talks, which Dublin and London had said they hoped would start by March.

He says it could lead to a "peace convention" and says the Catholic minority's fears of a return of Protestant domination are groundless.

Mr. Adams travels to the United States Wednesday to lobby opposition against Britain's plans. Northern Ireland junior Minister Michael Ancram arrived in the United States Monday to brief politicians on his government's position.

China blames Taiwan for poor relations

BEIJING (R) — Chinese Premier Li Peng blamed Taiwan's leaders Tuesday for deteriorating ties due to what he termed their bid for independence and he repeated Beijing's threat that separation would trigger a military attack.

Mr. Li gave an timetable for reunification with archival Taiwan in his speech in Beijing to mark the first anniversary of an eight-point proposal for reunification by President and Communist Party Chief Jiang Zemin.

"There is only one China in the world and Taiwan is an inalienable part of it," Mr. Li said.

In a tough speech reiterating Beijing's long-held position toward the Nationalist-ruled island, Mr. Li placed the blame for deteriorating ties between Taiwan and China squarely on the shoulders of Taiwan's authorities, accusing them of a drive to seek independence.

Mr. Li's speech was intended to serve both as a warning and as an olive branch, in effect repeating Mr. Jiang's offer of talks with Taiwan to end officially the state of hostility between the two sides of the Taiwan Strait, one diplomat said.

However, Mr. Li had also seized the opportunity to remind Taiwan voters that Beijing was determined to achieve reunification — with just two months to go before presidential elections expected to return Taiwan President Lee Teng-hui to office.

"Whatever changes might occur in the way in which the leadership in Taiwan is chosen, they cannot change the fact that Taiwan is a part of China and its leaders are only leaders of a region in China," Mr. Li said in the first sign Beijing may be trying to influence the March 23 vote.

China fears a popularly elected Lee might boost further the island's international image while at least one of his opponents openly supports Taiwan independence, the diplomat said.

"It will lead nowhere if some people attempt to use the change of Taiwan leaders as an excuse to put their separatist activities in a legal guise," Mr. Li said.

Improvement in ties with China, which has considered Taiwan a renegade province since the end of the Chinese Civil War in 1949, would depend on a policy shift by Taipei, Mr. Li said.



About 10,000 monarchists protest outside Parliament House in Sydney Tuesday, waving Australian flags and placards calling for the sacking of the Premier of the Australian state of New South Wales, Bob Carr. The protest, organised by Australians for Constitutional Monarchy, (ACM) follows Mr. Carr's decision to reduce the ceremonial role of the New South Wales vice-regal post and open Government House to the public (Reuters photo)

Keating challenges Howard to fight

CANBERRA (Agencies) — Australian Prime Minister Paul Keating, fighting from behind in the polls for his political life, rolled up his sleeves Tuesday for a sharp personal attack on his opponent, likening him to a hedgehog.

Mr. Keating challenged conservative opposition leader John Howard to come out and fight him in a series of debates and to answer questions from journalists before the March 2 election.

"He is rolling himself into the smallest ball possible so that he doesn't need to be accountable," Mr. Keating told reporters in Canberra.

"He is hiding," Mr. Keating said. Mr. Howard has said he is happy to debate Mr. Keating twice during the campaign, but has yet to agree with the government on the venue and timing of the debates.

Mr. Keating, renowned for his acerbic and often personal attacks on his opponents, had run a relatively statesmanlike campaign until launching into the attack on Mr. Howard.

Struggling to grab hold of an issue to attack his opponent, Mr. Keating was forced four days into the campaign to focus on Mr. Howard's reluctance to hold full press conferences and his refusal to agree to the venue and timing of debates.

"I mean John Howard is an outrage in terms of the way he is treating the Australian people," Mr. Keating said.

Mr. Howard has yet to propose any truly controversial policies, promising little in the way of significant change and campaigning with the call for a change after 13 consecutive years of Labour government.

Mr. Keating has been prime minister since 1991. Mr. Howard has pledged not to cut workers' wages, not to reform the national medical insurance system and to sell just a third of the state-owned telecommunications company, Telstra Corp.

This contrasts with the opposition's approach in the 1993 election campaign, when it promised sweeping tax reform, including a consumption tax, a complete shake-up of the industrial relations system and the complete sale of Telstra.

Mr. Keating successfully portrayed the opposition, then led by economist John Hewson, as right-wing ideologues promising painful and radical reform.

He overcame a hefty opinion poll deficit to win what many had described as the unwinnable election, given unemployment was more than 11 per cent.

Now Mr. Keating faces an opposition careful not to promise major reform and an opinion poll deficit of more than eight percentage points.

Mr. Howard said Mr. Keating's attack was predictable. "I think it is a sign that the prime minister is showing a bit of strain and lashing out," Mr. Howard said.

Meanwhile, Mr. Howard detailed a policy to encourage small business, including a relatively minor tax measure designed to improve business cashflow but not actually cut the tax take.

Mr. Keating said it was merely a technical measure.

In a separate development, thousands of monarchists Tuesday converged on the imposing official residence of the governor of New South Wales — Queen Elizabeth's representative in the state — to protest against the downgrading of his role.

The protest, organised by Australians for Constitutional Monarchy (ACM), comes in response to State Premier Bob Carr's decision earlier this month to reduce the ceremonial role of the vice-regal post and open the official residence, Government House, to the public.

Police estimated 15,000 predominantly elderly protesters lined the driveway to the Government House, which is set in acres of manicured gardens adjoining city parks, to farewell outgoing governor Rear Admiral Peter Sinclair.

The crowd then marched to Parliament House, singing Waltzing Matilda and displaying placards calling for Mr. Carr's sacking.

Mr. Carr's move was widely seen by monarchists as an attempt to bring in a republic "through the back door," by reducing the high-profile position to what they said was a rubber stamp role.

Security Council threatens Burundi with possible military action

UNITED NATIONS (AFP) — The Security Council brandished the threat Monday of possible military intervention and an international arms embargo in a bid to avert an ethnic bloodbath in Burundi.

But despite the tough wording of a resolution adopted unanimously here, it appeared unlikely that the Security Council would rapidly adopt measures to seedling in an international force to the Central African region.

In the resolution urging a political settlement in Burundi, the 15-member Council called on U.N. Secretary General Boutros Ghali to develop military "contingency plans" in case the situation suddenly deteriorated further.

The Council asked him to submit a "full report" by Feb. 20 fleshing out his proposals for a U.N. standby force which could be deployed in Zaire and for U.N. guards who could protect relief workers in Burundi.

A three-man technical security mission is currently in Burundi looking at the feasibility of sending in a contingent of U.N. guards.

The resolution, which welcomed that mission, asks Dr. Ghali "to consider what further steps of a preventive nature may be necessary in order to avoid the situation deteriorating further, and to develop contingency plans as appropriate."

Security Council permanent members such as Britain, France and the United States have so far

been cool to the idea of a military intervention.

But Council President Sir John West of Britain kept the threat alive by saying following the resolution's adoption by the 15-member body: "In our mind, no option is ruled out in principle."

The text calls on both sides in the Burundian conflict — pitting extremists from the Hutu majority against the Tutsi elite which controls the army — to join in a dialogue for national reconciliation.

U.S. Ambassador Madeleine Albright, who has just returned from an African tour which included a stop in Bujumbura, urged Burundian leaders to "isolate the extremists and seek a lasting peace."

The resolution was adopted over the objections of Burundi's ambassador to the United Nations Nsanzu Terence, who unsuccessfully demanded a last-minute change to the text concerning the possible sanctions.

He repeated Bujumbura's firm opposition to a preventive troop deployment, saying that while the crisis was real, "it is far from reaching an apocalyptic climax" and had not attained "a point of no return."

But Zaire enthusiastically endorsed the resolution, pledging to contribute "in drawing up plans, if any plans are drawn up."

Zairean Charge D'Affaires Lukahu Khahouji N'zaji told the Council session that it was time to "impose peace on those who are violating it,

Garth Brooks stuns awards show with protest

LOS ANGELES (R) — A defiant Garth Brooks stole the show at the American Music Awards Monday when he refused to accept his trophy for favourite overall artist, saying it should have gone to Hootie The Blowfish. Earlier, the country superstar had brought the audience to tears by performing a song, The Change, in front of moving videoclips from the Oklahoma City bombing, which took place in his home state. Brooks, whose three awards put him on level pegging with The Eagles, told the stunned audience his protest was not meant as a sign of disrespect to the awards organisers and to the 20,000 Americans who determine the winners in a survey. He then walked off the stage, with the award still at the podium.

Backstage he justified his actions by saying the easy-listening band Hootie The Blowfish had single-handedly salvaged a dreadful year for retailers with its multi-million-selling album *Cracked Rear View*. "It wasn't fair for me to walk away with that award — maybe a year or two ago when we had a really good year... But I've been around talking to retail the whole January to see what the hell's going on and everyone of them credit Hootie for keeping them alive in 1995, and I couldn't agree more so I thought that's who should have gotten it," Brooks told reporters. Brooks also won the awards for favourite country male artist and favourite country album for The Hits. His protest was in stark contrast to the atmosphere that greeted his performance of The Change. He received a standing ovation and country colleagues such as Reba McEntire dissolved in tears. The Eagles struck a surprise blow of their own by winning all the categories in which they were nominated. In doing so, they dampened the evening for five-time nominees Boyz II Men and Hootie The Blowfish. The Motown Soul Quartet ended up with two awards for favourite group and favourite album (II) in the Soul/RB categories. Hootie received just one, for favourite new pop/rock artist. Seattle rockers Pearl Jam, who did not attend the ceremony, won both their categories: Favourite heavy metal/hard rock artist and favourite alternative artist.

Elsewhere, Michael Jackson won for favourite male pop/rock artist, while Luther Vandross won the Soul/RB category. Mariah Carey won the female artist awards for both categories. Reba McEntire won for favourite female country artist.

Prince Philip falls victim to phone snoopers

LONDON (R) — Prince Philip, husband of Queen Elizabeth, has become the fourth member of the British royal family to fall victim to mobile telephone snoopers. Britain's Sun newspaper claimed Tuesday to have bought a 17-minute long tape on which Prince Philip is said to joke and grumble to an unidentified woman friend about family members. But the Sun was curiously reticent about publishing details of the Dec. 21 conversation that it said would "devastate Buckingham Palace". Intercepting private telephone conversations, and particularly recording them, has been made illegal in Britain. The Sun said Prince Philip was talking to a woman friend on his mobile phone from the Sandringham royal residence in rural Norfolk where the queen and family members spend Christmas. It said they touched on the impending divorce of Prince Charles and Princess Diana and other sensitive issues, but it gave no details.

Diana expects 'easy, quick divorce'

LONDON (R) — Princess Diana's divorce from her estranged husband Prince Charles will be sooner and easier than expected, a British newspaper said Tuesday.

The princess, who has been separated from the heir-to-the-throne for more than two years, also does not expect to have any problems about access to her sons Prince William, 13, and Prince Harry, 11 and is feeling "very stable" emotionally.

The tabloid Daily Mirror said the 34-year-old princess gave the amazingly frank assessment of her divorce proceedings during a lunch hosted by the Association of American Correspondents in London.

Princess Diana did not give a speech to the gathering of 70 journalists but chatted with guests over lunch. Commenting on her final parting with the prince she said it would be "sooner and easier than I had anticipated," the newspaper quoted her as telling guests.

"It is proceeding and going ahead." The princess who bared her soul in a controversial television interview in November admitted that having male friends was a problem.

"I find it much easier to have a female friendship than a friendship with a man. I am always being followed which make it very difficult," the newspaper quoted her as saying.

Princess Diana's television interview in

November in which she admitted being unfaithful to her husband and cast doubt over his ability to be king and said she wanted to be a roving ambassador for Britain sent shock waves through royal circles.

Shortly afterwards Queen Elizabeth, who was kept in the dark about the television programme, wrote to the warring couple urging them to divorce as soon as possible. Lawyers for the couple are reported to be working on final arrangements.

During the lunch the newspaper said the princess also revealed that she would love to visit British soldiers in Bosnia but the British Foreign Office would never allow it. "If you looked closely at her when she spoke of Bosnia, you could see she was pretty angry," a source told the Daily Mirror.

Princess Diana also reportedly played down the recent exodus of her staff. Her secretary, chauffeur and private secretary resigned recently and her press secretary left shortly after the television interview. "There is no problem with my staff. I feel much more in control now and in reality I am only one member of staff short," she said.

When asked by the American guests if she had any intention of visiting the United States, she replied that she had no plans at the moment.

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Elections go with territory

AT ISSUE behind Israeli Foreign Minister Ehud Barak's provocative declaration in the wake of the resumption of the Syrian-Israeli peace talks in Maryland that his country would never allow the Syrians to wet their feet in the Tiberian waters is of course the extent of the projected Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights. On the one hand, Damascus seeks an Israeli withdrawal to the pre-1967 war demarcation lines which would mean Syrian access to the eastern shores of Lake Tiberias as well as control over some of the water tributaries to the lake. Israel, on the other hand, is only thinking in terms of the borders that existed between Palestine and Syria prior to the 1947-48 war, which effectively means that the Syrians would indeed be unable to wet their feet in the waters of the lake.

This dispute may yet prove to be one of the most formidable tasks before the negotiators from both sides. But Damascus may be standing on more solid grounds when it demands a return to the 1967 frontiers.

In begin with, U.N. Security Council resolution 242 which called for Israeli withdrawal from Arab territories occupied during the war of 1967 in return for clearly refers to the 1967 lines and not the 1948 borders. It will be remembered also that resolution 242 reaffirmed that acquisition of territory by force is simply unacceptable. Thus, by taking these two points into consideration, we might necessarily reach the conclusion that Israel should withdraw to the 1967 lines. Any other interpretation would make a mockery of the letter and spirit of resolution 242 which is still the mutually recognised basis for the entire peace process in the region.

On broader grounds, it is most difficult to accept Mr. Barak's proposition that the Syrians may never touch the waters of Lake Tiberias. If Israel is truly seeking "warm" and comprehensive peace with all its neighbours then the kind of normalisation that it has been insisting on is supposed to establish cordial relations between the two sides. Why then would Mr. Barak think that the Syrians should be deprived of reaching the eastern shorelines of a lake that stands between the two countries?

Perhaps the new Israeli foreign minister is concerned about the extent of Syrian water rights should Damascus enjoy a foothold in one side of the water body. As a riparian state, Syria, would then be able to make additional claims to the waters of the lake. If these are indeed the fears and anxieties of Israel, let them be spelled out in the open instead of making provocative statements during a negotiating process that is supposed to be very sensitive and crucial. International law on the rights of riparian states is ample enough to provide basis for agreement.

If Mr. Barak, on the other hand, chooses to take a harder line at this juncture for tactical reasons, we might as well bid farewell to any chance for an early accord between Syria and Israel. In this case we can expect an early Israeli Knesset elections which Prime Minister Shimon Peres and his Labour Party hope to win. Perhaps that is exactly what Mr. Barak has had in mind when he sought to barden in public his delegation's bargaining position.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

A WRITER in Al Ra'i daily has expressed fear that Syria and Iraq will be facing war with Turkey unless an amicable and acceptable solution for the water-sharing of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers is found. Abdullah Radwan said that the two Arab states rely to a great extent on the two rivers for irrigation purposes and they are concerned and worried over Turkey's plans to build a series of dams on the two rivers in its own territory, a move that would severely reduce the amount of water reaching Iraq and Syrian territory. The greater increases in the number of population and the higher the standard of living, the greater will be the need for increased amounts of river waters in Syria and Iraq, argued the writer. He said that with the construction of the dams on the two rivers in Turkey, not only lesser quantities of water will reach Iraq and Syria, but the salinity levels in this water will rise to dangerous proportions, making it unfit for irrigation. Unless Syria and Iraq coordinated their stands and negotiated an acceptable settlement over the water issue with Turkey where the two rivers rise, said the writer the coming decade would inevitably witness an armed conflict between the Arabs and Turkey, with dangerous consequences on the security and stability of the whole Middle East region.

A WRITER in Al Doustour bailed a decision by Hamas to adopt a new strategy based on objectivity and accepting the de facto situation in Palestine. Saleh Qallab said having studied the outcome of the Palestinian elections, Hamas has decided to embark on talks to reach an understanding with the Palestine National Authority and to accept negotiations with Israel because it now believes if it fails to do that it will be left behind and will face isolation. Nothing that Hamas still opposes the Oslo agreement, the writer said that its members can continue to do that through democratic means and through politically-accepted tactics. Furthermore, by participating in the Palestinian municipal elections, Hamas will secure many successes and gain backing at the grass root level which will in turn boost their political stand, added the writer. Of course, he said, a change in the tactics would draw criticism from the most extremist groups, but Hamas should not mind this criticism because it will be responding to the requirements of the new situation on the ground and the desires of the Palestinian people.

Washington Watch

Palestinian elections — 'giant step in the right direction'

By Dr. James Zogby

I was an international monitor observing the Jan. 20 Palestinian elections. On election day I covered over two dozen polling stations in the Khan Yunis district of Gaza. It was one of the most remarkable and moving events I have had the privilege to witness. So many people and scenes left strong impressions on me. Here is one:

At each poll we were asked to observe whether elections laws were being violated. One such law provided that an illiterate voter could ask for and receive assistance from someone else, but a literate person could assist only three such illiterate voters. At one poll I observed a small girl assisting an older woman with her ballot. A few minutes later I saw the same girl assisting an even older woman. After another few minutes I saw the same girl helping a man. At that point I felt I should speak to her. I asked her age. She was twelve. I asked what she was doing. She replied that since she was the only member of her entire family who could read her parents had asked her to accompany them to the polls so they could vote. She was proud of her accomplishments as her parents had been proud that they had an opportunity to vote.

The recent Palestinian elections were significant for the profound impact they had on internal Palestinian politics. They were, in a real sense, a second Palestinian intifada, a psychologically self-liberating and politically transforming event.

While some observers and commentators have looked only at the outcome of the elections, it is most important to note the social dynamism of the process.

The elections have created a new and well-deserved self-confidence among the Palestinian officials and bureaucrats who implemented them. From a technical perspective, the elections were a marvel. In less than one month, 7,000 teachers were recruited and organised in teams to register voters. In a comprehensive sweep of the West Bank and Gaza, over 1,000,000 Palestinians were registered — over 95 per cent of all who were eligible to vote!

Within the same short-time, the Palestinian election teams were able to establish the procedures and laws governing the campaign period and the election itself; to demarcate the electoral district and polling places; and train the teams who would supervise the voting and count the ballots.

These enormous challenges were met in such a short period of time because in every instance Palestinians were forced to react to an external factor: the negotiations with the Israelis were an intrusive prerequisite.

Many of the objections that have been raised regarding the process leading up to the election are unfairly placed at the doorstep of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA). It is true, for example, that Palestinian election officials made changes at what appeared to be the last minute — but in many instances they were responding to the negotiating process which imposed conditions and obstacles on the entire electoral process.

Although the conduct of the elections was largely free, they were still not free elections in the sense that Palestinians are not yet a free people. In fact, this may have been the first election of its kind: a free election among a people who still lack sovereignty and live encircled by a military occupation. Thus, many aspects of these elections were distorted by continuing Israeli domination which imposed limits on Palestinian freedoms and necessitated compromises which the Palestinians were forced to accept in order to have the elections in the first place.

Some issues can be best understood when seen in this context: take, for example, the complaint that candidates did not receive equal time on Palestinian television and radio. Since the PNA was only able to secure the right to operate one national radio and one television station during the hard-fought negotiations with Israel, it is difficult to see how all 678 candidates could have received equal coverage on the available outlets. As it was, the Voice of Palestine radio made available two free minutes to all candidates. That itself took up too many hours of not very interesting air time. The Palestinian television station has been criticised for showing too much of Yasser Arafat and not enough of his

challenger, Samiba Khalil. A closer examination of the coverage reveals that it was not Mr. Arafat the candidate but Mr. Arafat the PLO chairman and PNA president presiding over celebrations in the newly liberated cities of Jenin, Tulkarem, Nablus, Ramallah and others. These were, in fact, historic events, making their coverage a legitimate editorial decision. To criticise this would be the same as criticising the U.S. media for focusing so much attention during December and January on President Clinton and Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole, despite the fact that the coverage was of their critical negotiations over the 1996 budget and not of their 1996 presidential campaigns.

Despite these difficulties and distortions in the election process, resulting from the fact that Palestinians could not freely set up their system in their own time frame and in a manner which would fully meet their needs, the remarkable thing is that Palestinians embraced this process, performed the burdensome task of making it work, and created a system that ran as efficiently as most observers had seen.

If the technical aspects of the elections were noteworthy, so too were the political aspects of the process. It was transformative. Palestinian society was profoundly affected.

At the beginning of the process, Fateh activists announced their slates of candidates, many of whom had been leaders of the infada. The central leadership of Fateh rejected many of these candidates and sought to balance the slates by adding leading businessmen, members of prominent families and other members of the Fateh leadership who had returned to Palestine from abroad.

What was significant was that the Fateh activists struck from the lists and others who had not made the list of the central leadership decided to run anyway. As any American party leader would note, Fateh did what party leaders always do — attempt to create balance and appeal to diverse constituencies. The independents also did the right thing by challenging their leadership. This open and free challenge is the best guarantee of democracy in practice. The fact that so many of these challengers won on Jan. 20 is evidence that the process was open and provided voters with an opportunity to choose their own representatives.

Not only Fateh but also Hamas and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) were affected by the elections. At one point the leadership of Hamas and the PFLP from within the West Bank and the Gaza Strip decided to run for the Council and support the elections. In the end, however, they were forced by their outside leadership to withdraw their candidates. Nevertheless, the inside Hamas leadership actually did encourage supporters to vote. The fact that there was a 90 per cent turnout in some of the Hamas dominated areas of Gaza makes it clear that they understood the importance their constituents placed in the entire process and, therefore, the need to establish independence from their outside leadership.

In all of these instances, the leading Palestinian movements were affected by the election process. As a result, many observers now expect further changes: the transformation of these movements into political parties, greater assertiveness and independence exercised by the leadership inside Palestine; and the creation of new political formations by blocs of newly-elected Council members.

Not only were the political groups changed by the election process, but the candidates themselves were transformed by the act of campaigning. For three intense weeks every diwan, every social gathering, every city street was the scene of intense political discussions. To run as a candidate for election is a unique experience. The act of going directly to tens of thousands of people — seeking support, debating issues, convincing voters of one's own programme and qualifications — in the end these actions not only invest candidates in the process of election but sensitises them to the concerns of those whose support they seek. It was not difficult to observe how many of the candidates had changed over the three weeks of campaigning; they spoke more aggressively about their ideas and programmes, regardless of whatever positions they may have formerly held (whether they had been ministers of the PNA or opponents); they uniformly condemned corruption and spoke of reform and democracy; and all were eager to take visitors to meet their con-

sults — their new source of affirmation and authority.

Even the physical landscape of Palestine changed. In the past, the walls of some streets were covered with slogans and posters. The slogans were protests and the posters were pictures of martyrs. Today's banners and slogans are campaign pledges and exhortations, and the faces are of candidates who hope to be leaders of the future Palestine Council.

With all of these many levels of changes, the people of the West Bank and Gaza also became transformed and energised — the best evidence of which was the massive showing on election day: almost 800,000 turned out to vote, despite real hardships. In Jerusalem, there was intimidation and risk as hundreds of Israeli military personnel checked identifications, harassed and even arrested potential voters. In Hebron, too, there were taunts from right-wing settlers and a fear of violent disturbances. Many travelled long distances and, in many instances, waited hours to cast their ballots.

In one polling place in the Khan Yunis area of Gaza, 1,600 voters (over three-quarters of whom were illiterate) came to that one location to vote. Many arrived at 7:00 in the morning and were still waiting to vote by 4:00 in the afternoon. The overwhelming response was too much for the small group of election officers running the poll. Because so many voters were illiterate, it took even longer for them to cast their ballots. That poll, like some others, stayed open until 11:30 at night so that the crowds that had been chanting for their right to vote would not have to be disappointed. At this particular polling station, four officers stayed at work for more than 16 hours, checking lists and collecting ballots, and then returned after a short break to sort and count the 1,600 ballots that had been cast. This level of commitment and public service was in evidence throughout the West Bank and Gaza on election day.

Were the elections fair? From the observations of most monitors, the answer is decidedly yes. Were there irregularities? Of course there were; but many alleged irregularities turned out to be rumour and could not be substantiated. Some others were true, but, having participated in and observed elections throughout the U.S. over the last 30 years, I can honestly say that I saw nothing in Gaza that I had not seen in Philadelphia, Chicago, New York and Detroit, and this despite our 200-year experience with democracy. This is not to excuse such behaviour, but rather to simply put irregularities into context. Over all, the elections were free and fair — and the questionable behaviour was minimal.

Even in the circumstance of lacking real sovereignty (resulting in either direct Israeli interference in the case of Jerusalem and Hebron or indirect interference, or in drawn-out negotiations and other restrictions placed on free Palestinian movement, expression and assembly), of the shortness of the time given to organise the elections and train the management teams to run them, and the difficulties presented in some areas by illiteracy and traditionalism — Palestinians overwhelmingly embraced the process and made it work.

The entire election process produced a transformation in Palestinian politics. The election of a new Council has created a new leadership forum for emerging Palestinian national leaders and for new Palestinian political programmes. The process has also yielded a body of leaders who must be responsive to those who chose them, and who will impose a greater degree of accountability in governance. It is this body that will now have the responsibility of protecting the rights of those who elected them; providing a check on arbitrary arrests like those that marred the pre-election period; overseeing the decision-making process; and working with the executive branch to provide legislation to govern the daily affairs of Palestine. It is this body, in the years to come, that with the newly-elected Palestinian president will proclaim a Palestinian state in Palestine.

Palestinians may not yet be free or have sovereignty over the land of Palestine. But they now have the fruits of a democratic process, which will be developed and institutionalised. A great deal remains to be done, but Jan. 20 marked a giant step in the right direction.

Pope to visit a forgotten Central America

By Philip Putelella

VATICAN CITY — When Pope John Paul I visited Central America in 1983, it was a cold war battleground whose civil strife and guerrilla wars polarised the superpowers.

It was also a Christian battlefield that pitted idealistic "liberation theologians" against comfortable roman catholic conservatives aligned with the political and military class.

Next week, the Pope returns to a Central America the world, and many members of his church, have largely forgotten.

Thirteen years on he will try to remind the world that although the killing fields

are largely part of the past and democracy is being consolidated, the region is still ridden with problems such as poverty, illiteracy and crime.

The 75-year-old Pope will visit three central American countries — Guatemala, Nicaragua and El Salvador — from Feb. 5 to 9 before making a two-day stop in Venezuela.

The Pope has visited all four countries before but this time their citizens will see a slower, aged Pope who has had a spate of health problems in the past four years.

All of the countries are overwhelmingly Catholic but as in the rest of Latin America the church has

been losing ground to fast-growing fundamentalist Evangelical movements, or sects.

"These countries (in central America) still have the scent of war about them and the Pope hopes he can help and inspire them to move away from the past and towards reconciliation," said Vatican spokesman Joaquin Navarro-Valls.

Keeping democracy and reforms on track has not been easy since the 1987 Central American peace accords in which presidents committed their countries to ceasefires and dialogue.

The Pontiff's first Central American stop, Guatemala, will be perhaps the most difficult. It is there that

democracy is probably most delicate and where the violent past is most murky.

Human rights groups say some 100,000 people were killed in government anti-insurgency campaigns there in the 1980s.

President Alvaro Arzu, a businessman elected in January, has promised to conclude peace talks to end the 35-year-old civil war within his first year in office.

Mr. Arzu, who defeated a candidate who was the dark-picked proxy for ex-dictator General Efraim Rios Montt, has also promised to keep reformist elements of Guatemala's powerful army at the top of the military hierarchy.

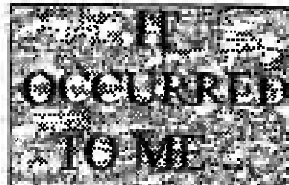
It was only last year that

Guatemala officially abolished a 24,000-member, army-backed paramilitary network which human rights groups have accused of abuses.

The Pope will be based in Guatemala during the Central American part of his 69th foreign trip and make day trips.

Nicaragua, which the Pope visits on Feb. 7, was run by the Soviet-backed Sandinistas when he last visited.

The Sandinistas, who were ousted in 1990 elections, visibly angered the Pontiff in 1983 by trying to drown out his homily with political slogans at mass.



By Ali Kassay

The masochism quotient

Questions that are addressed and discussed freely at virtually every gathering concern the Middle East and North Africa Economic Summit. If it was such a success, where are the investments that it should have attracted? How long before the economic recovery begins to manifest itself?

Recently, I was in one such gathering, where these questions received an interesting response: The summit was a success in that it brought to the attention of potential investors the opportunities that Jordan offers, in a manner that impressed them most favourably. However, to impress is one thing. To make someone stay and invest is totally another. The success of the conference is reflected in the number of businessmen who have been attracted to undertake exploratory visits to Jordan since October, which is considerable. Unfortunately, according to the speaker, having done their exploration, the visitors turn tail and rush, in all haste, in the general direction of away.

The explanation of this behaviour is simple. Jordan competes for foreign investment with other countries in the region and beyond, where an investor can set up a company from the comfort of his office, by a simple phone call to his lawyer, who then takes care of the paperwork. Entrepreneurs who come here hoping for similar treatment find that their expectations run into a head-on collision with bureaucrats, who seem to believe that their mission in life is to keep Jordan a fit place for heroes to live in, by putting as many barriers as possible in the way of perfidious businessmen, particularly those from foreign parts.

Recently, however, our bureaucrats surpassed themselves. A foreign resident informed me that the Traffic Department would give him a permit to drive only a specific vehicle, the licence number of which should be written on his driver's licence. "What if I sell the car and buy another one?" He inquired. "Well, in that case you get a new driving licence with the details of your new car on it. It is only a day or two's worth of paperwork," was the answer. "And what if I want to drive my wife's car, or rent one for a day?" he persisted. "Sorry, Sir. Regulations," was the answer.

It would appear useless to hope that the trend towards more and more paperwork may, one day, reverse itself. Therefore, to avoid the element of surprise that makes potential investors disappear in a blur of colour and a cloud of dust, it may be judicious to prepare them for things to come, by including, in the new guide on investment in Jordan, a measure of the bureaucratic work involved in establishing a new enterprise: The Masochism Quotient (MC). It would be possible to plot variations of the MC among the various sectors of the economy, and even to measure the domestic MC for the family planning to settle in this beautiful country. In the long run, the MC can be plotted against time to indicate the progress of Jordan in the way of deregulation and administrative reform.

As a point of fact, it may be possible to justify the creation of a new government department to measure, calculate and refuse to publish data on the Masochism Quotient. Apart from anything else, this will make a valuable contribution to the fight against unemployment.

'All the important parties in the region want things to go forward'

By Daphne Barak
Cairo

HE HAS BEEN right at the centre of the political processes in the Middle East in recent years: he is involved in the negotiations between the Americans, the Israelis, the Palestinians, the Syrians, he meets with the Saudi foreign minister, and reports to the Moroccans on developments.

Amr Musa — an experienced diplomat — does not usually give away any information. An interview with him could add up to a collection of well-formulated sentences that do not reveal anything — not about the political processes in which he is involved, and not about the man with the polished Western manners and the compelling charm.

But this time, when we met in his office in Cairo, he was more open. Maybe the evening hour at which the interview was held after a full day of work with a tight schedule contributed to this or maybe also the friendly relationship we have maintained over many years came to my aid.

So the questions started: Question: The issue that is currently considered "hot" in the region is the negotiations between Israel and Syria. How are things going?

Answer: We are still at the beginning. It is true that we have been bearing some very optimistic chords lately, but how optimistic we should be — we will know that when Christopher Warren visits the region. There are no ifs and buts here; we will know the precise state of affairs, and very soon.

Q: The assassination of Yitzhak Rabin!

A: Yes? Q: It seems to me that it speeded up the peace process between Israel and

Syria. How did it have that effect?

A: Look, it wasn't the assassination itself! Maybe this was an indirect result. I mean, now Shimon Peres is driving the wagon, it is the way in which he is conducting the negotiations that is very different from the way the Mr. Rabin conducted them. Peres understands the Syrian sensitivities very well, and his approach is different and more fruitful than Rabin's was. Rabin's assassination is not the main element here — the main element is the fact that Peres is now in power and he is free to drive the wagon as he sees fit, at his own pace.

Q: Rabin was assassinated. Before that, Sadat. They tried to assassinate Hosni Mubarak, your president, this year. Are you afraid?

A: No, why should I be? You travel more than I do, you meet more world leaders. Are you afraid?

Q: I am a fatalist...

A: So am I, Daphne, so am I... These are critical times. There is an atmosphere of terrorism, but I believe we will defeat terrorism. I believe the mood of the people now is ripe for achieving more of a balance, they want a calmer existence. I — just like you — am a fatalist. Maybe I was sent here to fill this role, maybe I was intended for it, who knows?

Q: Killing "The Engineer" in Gaza — was it good for the peace in the Middle East, or had?

A: Look, I want campaigns of this type to continue in the Middle East. It is very problematic. One murder, one killing, will lead to another. If, indeed, it turns out that the Israeli Mossad was behind the murder — it embarrasses Yasser Arafat. Why embarrass the Palestinians, whose situation is delicate to begin

with? Q: Tell me about the Saudi Arabia involvement behind the scenes of the negotiations.

A: We are all involved in one way or another — all the important parties in the region. We all want things to go forward. We (Egypt) support the Syrian approach. Everything in return for everything, meaning complete peace in return for a complete withdrawal of the Israelis from the Golan Heights. For the Saudi Arabians, the problem of Jerusalem is very sensitive. For them, peace between the Israelis and the Syrians will be an important step in preparation for an overall peace in the region. But not a final one. For them, until the Palestinian problem is not finally solved, the matter will not be solved finally. So they are following developments closely, and in keeping with their style — at a low profile. I keep them in the picture.

Q: In Saudi Arabia the regime changed hands smoothly. In Israel as well (after Rabin's assassination). There was also an attempt to assassinate your president, Hosni Mubarak. What will happen if, God forbid, they will succeed?

A: No I do not agree. Jerusalem is not beyond every solution.

Q: Do you have a scenario?

A: We are all thinking about it incessantly, producing scenarios, possible scenarios... I'm still not ready to talk about it.

Q: But you and others are discussing it informally.

A: Yes, the informal discussions regarding Jerusalem have begun already. They began a long time ago. In May we will begin discussing it formally. I think you will be surprised. I think we shall



AMR MUSA

Q: Jerusalem...

A: Yes? Q: It seems to me that agreements are being made regarding intermediate steps, but when they get to the main question, Jerusalem, the whole process will become stalled.

A: No I do not agree. Jerusalem is not beyond every solution.

Q: Do you have a scenario?

A: We are all thinking about it incessantly, producing scenarios, possible scenarios... I'm still not ready to talk about it.

Q: But you and others are discussing it informally.

A: Yes, the informal discussions regarding Jerusalem have begun already. They began a long time ago. In May we will begin discussing it formally. I think you will be surprised. I think we shall

solve the problem. So far, we have built up confidence, the basis for life together, for building a common future.

Q: Speaking about life together, it is customary to speak of the peace between Jordan and Israel as "a warm peace" in contrast to "a cold peace" between Israel and Egypt.

A: Well, that's life... It is true, these are two types of relations. But, they are relations. For us, Egyptians, it is very complicated. There are old residues... It is legitimate to have ups and downs in our relations. Look, I wasn't surprised at the warmth that developed between the Israelis and the Jordanians. But all the time there is talk of "normalisation". This is normalisation. These are normal relations. There are crises, difficulties, the Palestinian prob-

lem... we are coping.

Q: Do you support the continuation of the international embargo against Iraq?

A: An embargo against a whole nation — this cannot be an ultimate solution. The moment will come when we shall have to remove it if Iraq obeys the U.N. resolutions. In contrast to the peace in the Middle East, I can't predict dates.

Q: Are behind the scenes diplomatic activities taking place regarding removal of the embargo?

A: When the Iraqis want to talk — we listen. We meet them in the Arab League, in the corridors of the U.N. For the moment there is no breakthrough.

Q: Egypt tends to make a distinction between Iraq and another state upon which a world embargo is being imposed — Libya. Your president, Mubarak, constantly praises the transformation that has taken place in Colonel Qadhafi and we, the world, can't see it.

A: The Qadhafi of today is completely different from the Qadhafi of the past. He is even willing to bring to trial the two from Lockerby in a third country! Look and see what a drastic change that is. That is why Mubarak received the correct impression.

Q: The world hasn't exactly become entrenched... A: In 1996, listen to what I am saying, the world will listen to Qadhafi. I predict that it will happen soon.

Q: The triumph of the Islamic Party in Turkey. Were you surprised?

A: This is the mood in Turkey, I wasn't completely surprised. We followed developments there, and we expected the Islamic Party to get stronger there. That is why I did not exactly understand Ciller's move.

There is food for thought there. Years ago, Ata Turk established a state with an Islamic tradition. Years have gone by and the Turks have returned to their origins.

Q: How will all this affect the relations between Egypt and Turkey?

A: It will not have any effect. Egypt and Turkey have a history of excellent relations. In "the new Middle East" Turkey has an important role and place. Every party will learn to find its place.

Q: Between mediating here, and involvement in negotiations there — is there anything you want?

A: Yes. A vacation... I dream of lying on a beach for four or five days. I would choose a beach in Egypt. In the past five years I have been so busy...

Q: Actually, because you don't come from a military background, you have reached the pinnacle of your career, and at a young age. What about the future?

A: Maybe I will do something else. Maybe I will leave politics.

Q: What was the most exciting moment for you as foreign minister?

A: The night before the signature between the Israelis and the Palestinians. It was clear that the two sides will make peace only if a third party will come to their aid. The Israelis were so tough. They quibbled about each and every point. The Palestinians were not prepared for it at all. We sat until three in the morning, we didn't move. I even remember the sandwiches we ordered. We fought for every kilometre, every house...

Q: With whom did you create a special chemistry during all these events?

A: Among the Arabs? Don't get me into trouble. But with Shimon Peres I

have a special friendship. He has such ideas. He is like a cloud that brings down a shower of ideas and solutions. We feel very comfortable together. On the Arab side, I'll mention only one name and...

Q: Peres said recently that he is prepared to relinquish nuclear power in return for peace. Is this a crucial condition for peace in the Middle East?

A: Yes! It is impossible to achieve peace without relinquishing nuclear power. We have been talking about this for a long time already. Only the Israelis are still opposed to it. That is the step that will lead to a final peace. Israeli military supremacy will always push Israel to make mistaken decisions.

Q: A summit meeting between Peres and Assad will take place during 1996?

A: That depends a lot on what Israel will be willing to give up. You know, you Americans are always impressed by such summit meetings. I understand, it is a celebration for the media. But the Syrians do not believe in personal diplomacy — meetings between Peres and Assad, Sharaa and Barak... it's not their style. They do not understand the Israeli (and American) stubbornness regarding such meetings. It's simply not their style.

Q: The right wing in Israel was weakened after Rabin's assassination. Is this good for the peace or bad for the peace?

A: If it leads to an overall peace in the region, then it's good. But don't forget that Egypt signed a peace agreement with a right-wing government in Israel (headed by Menachem Begin). On the other hand, comparing Binayamin Netanyahu to such an impressive leader like Begin... time will tell.

Saudi concern rises over Bahrain

(Continued from page 1)

killed between December 1994 and April last year. A new wave of violence erupted this month after the government banned political gatherings at Shiite mosques.

Qatar infuriated Bahrain earlier this month when its state-run television carried interviews with Bahraini opposition leaders in exile. The two neighbours have been locked in a border dispute for years.

Prince Abdullah's remarks were the second Saudi expression of concern over the Bahraini unrest in 10 days. After a bomb blast at a Bahrain hotel earlier this month, Saudi Arabia said it strongly condemned "this terrorist act aimed at attempting to impair the security of Bahrain."

No-one was injured in the blast and none of the exiled opposition groups waging a propaganda war against the government has come forward to claim responsibility. Bahrain, a small island of fewer than 600,000 people including 225,000 foreigners, is the Gulf's main financial

centre with 48 offshore banking units and dozens of other banks and financial institutions.

It is linked to Saudi Arabia by a 25-kilometre causeway opened in 1986 and has become a popular destination for Saudis during the weekend — Thursday and Friday.

Saudi Arabia itself has a sizeable minority of Shites among its 17.9 million population, mainly in the kingdom's oil-producing Eastern Province facing Bahrain.

Saudi Arabia is Bahrain's main ally within the six-member Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), which also includes Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar and Oman.

Saudi concern at events in Bahrain is shared by its GCC allies and also by the United States, which uses the island as the base of its new Fifth Fleet charged with enforcing the Clinton administration's "dual containment" policy against Iran and Iraq.

Israel sees no breakthrough

(Continued from page 1)

cised "Israeli forces hostile to peace with Syria, who put too much emphasis on the problems of security arrangements to distract attention

from the main issue, a total withdrawal from the Golan Heights."

It singled out Mr. Barak, a former armed forces chief of staff.

Israeli jets raid South Lebanon

(Continued from page 1)

ational bases of the Hizbollah organisation."

"Pilots reported accurate hits and returned safely to base," the spokesman said.

According to Israeli military sources, the air raids also followed an attack with mortar shells, rocket-propelled grenades and automatic weapons late Monday on positions of the Israeli-allied South Lebanon Army (SLA) in the western sector of the "security zone."

No casualties or damages were reported in that attack.

There was no immediate word on casualties in the air strikes, the first since Nov. 30. Israeli jets launched a total of 25 air raids into Lebanon in 1995, killing 17 people.

Tuesday's air raid seemed to be in retaliation for a huge

bomb blast on Monday about 500 metres north of the border with Israel.

A car packed with 200 kilograms of explosives blew up near an Israeli-backed militia post near the border but no members of the SLA manning the post were hurt in the explosion. SLA sources said it may have killed two passengers inside the car.

The Israeli coordinator for Lebanon, Uri Lubrani, accused Hizbollah of planting the car bomb.

"The war continues in Lebanon. The peace negotiations have failed to calm the situation," he told SLA radio Voice of the South, referring to Israeli negotiations with Syria, which maintains an estimated 40,000 troops in Lebanon.

Iraq, U.N. to skirt thorny issues

(Continued from page 1)

Council's Sanctions Committee, to ensure the prices represented fair market value, and the money paid into a U.N. escrow account.

At current prices, oil exports of \$2 billion over six months would amount to about 700,000 barrels per day. Iraq used to pump more than three million barrels a day before the Gulf war.

Out of every \$1 billion raised by Iraq through its sale of oil, 30 per cent or \$300 million would have to be earmarked for a U.N. Gulf war reparations fund. Between \$20 million and \$50 million would go to meet other U.N. costs, including those of a special commission overseeing the scrapping of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction.

Between \$130 million and \$150 million of every \$1 billion would be funnelled through U.N. humanitarian programmes for the mainly Kurdish northern provinces of Iraq.

Another condition is that the larger share of oil exports should be carried in the 1,050 kilometres pipeline from Kirkuk, in Iraq, to Yumurtalik, in Turkey, and the rest via the Iraqi Gulf port of Mina Al Bakr.

Officials here have not said whether Iraq is seeking to renegotiate the terms of Resolution 986. The Security Council meanwhile has refused to amend the measure.

French deputy Jean-Bernard Raimond, former foreign minister, said after returning from a recent visit to Iraq that President Saddam Hussein had the "political will" to strike a deal on the measure even if he did not agree to it.

A diplomat based here said Iraq has changed its position after having received "guarantees" from France and Russia, both permanent members of the U.N. Security Council, that this "resolution would be applied in good faith."

Bosnians remove heavy weapons

(Continued from page 1)

ing all heavy weapons be pulled back two kilometres (one mile) from the former confrontation line in line with the peace accord.

Meanwhile the Bosnian Serb "premier," Rajko Kasaigic, accused the Muslims and Croats of failing to release all Serbs in their jails, as the Bosnians renewed demands for information on thousands of Muslims missing from their former enclaves in eastern Bosnia.

The Serbs would "link our participation in discussions to implement the Dayton accords while the fulfilment by the other parties of their obligations," the Bosnian Serb news agency SRNA reported Monday.

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) said only a handful of prisoners remained in illegal detention, and said Bosnia's Croats were the only party in full compliance over prisoner releases.

However, it expressed concern for the fate of scores more unregistered POWs.

Officially, the Bosnian government has only six prisoners remaining, the Serbs 26, although the ICRC is demanding access to 110 unregistered Serb prisoners

thought to be held in a government prison in Tuzla.

Angry Bosnian refugees in that northeastern town protested for a second day against the ICRC, who they blame for the lack of information about the fate of thousands of civilians missing since Serb forces overran the eastern Srebrenica enclave last July.

Around 100 refugees, most of them women from the former Muslim enclave of Srebrenica, gathered again outside the ICRC building in Tuzla, which they ransacked Monday to protest the international community's failure to trace thousands of mainly male civilians.

The refugees believe thousands of Muslims missing since Serb forces overran the eastern enclave last July are still being held captive in flagrant violation of the Dayton peace accords.

But despite the continuing protest and the extensive damage done to the building when refugees smashed doors and windows, ICRC officials were adamant Tuesday that neither their mandate to supervise prisoner release nor their tactics of negotiations and persuasion would change.

Beta Carotene no preventive of diseases, two studies find

By Gina Kolata
New York Times Service

NEW YORK — Two large studies have found that contrary to the beliefs or hopes of the millions who take it, beta carotene, a vigorously promoted vitamin supplement, is completely ineffective in preventing cancer or heart disease.

One of the studies found that it might even be harmful to some people.

U.S. health officials said they hoped that this would spell the end of the beta carotene fad. The idea that a simple supplement capsule might fend off cancer and other diseases, they said, has simply proved too good to be true.

Dr. Richard Klausner, director of the National Cancer Institute, which financed both studies, said: "With clearly no benefit and even a hint of possible harm, I can see no reason that an individual should take beta carotene."

Beta carotene is a naturally occurring substance in fruits and vegetables that is

converted to vitamin A in the body. The cancer institute recommends that rather than rely on supplements, people eat low-fat diets abundant in fruits and vegetables, whose hundreds of substances combined might be fostering the disease protection that has been sought in beta carotene.

One of the beta carotene studies, the Physicians' Health Study, involved 22,071 doctors who were randomly assigned to take 50 milligrams of beta carotene or a dummy pill every other day. The study ended on Dec. 31, after 12 years, with the conclusion that beta carotene supplements did not protect against cancer or heart disease.

The other study, the Beta Carotene and Retinol Efficacy Trial, or Carot, tested both beta carotene, in a dose of 30 milligrams a day, and vitamin A, in a daily dose of 25,000 international units. The 18,314 participants in this study took beta carotene, vitamin A, both or a placebo.

Preliminary studies hint-

ed that beta carotene might be especially effective in preventing lung cancer, and all the subjects in the Carot study were at high risk for lung cancer because they smoked or had worked with asbestos.

The study was halted on Jan. 10 — or 21 months ahead of schedule — when investigators concluded not only that the vitamins were not helpful but also that they might be harmful: the rate of death from lung cancer was 28 per cent higher among the participants who had taken the supplements than among those who had taken the placebo, and the rate of death from heart disease was 17 per cent higher.

The reason for these increases are unclear and they were too small to be considered statistically significant. But they were nonetheless worrisome.

The two studies were preceded by a Finnish study of 29,133 male smokers. That study, published in 1994, found a slight increase in the death rate among those who had taken beta carotene. But some critics of the research said the beta

carotene dose, 20 milligrams a day, had been too low to find the benefit that they expected.

Others said the men had been studied for too short a time, five to eight years. And still others said that even if beta carotene did not help smokers, it would help healthy people.

To underscore the importance of the new findings, Dr. Klausner announced them at a news conference at the National Cancer Institute in Bethesda, Maryland, without waiting for the usual publication in a medical journal.

The Carot study's director, Dr. Gilbert Omenn, dean of public health at the University of Washington in Seattle, said its results were not definite proof that beta carotene is harmful. But the reason it was halted, he said, is that its findings were reminiscent of those in Finland.

"These vitamins were providing no benefit," Dr. Omenn said, "and may — with the emphasis on may — have adverse effects."

Iraq woos key U.N. members

(Continued from page 12)

sanctions deals with Baghdad.

France is seen by diplomats as one of the keenest supporters in the Security Council of moves to allow Iraq to sell a limited volume of its oil under U.N. supervision to alleviate the suffering of its people.

China is the latest Security Council member to gain Baghdad's attention while Japanese energy companies are said to be talking with ELF and Total as potential consortium members in the development of the Majnoon and Nahr Umar fields.

Iraqi oil Minister Amer Rasheed visited China in November and industry sources say both sides are working towards an accord similar to the one already

signed with Russia.

On Tuesday, Iraq described U.S. presidents as "poisonous spiders" and the United States as a "monster" whose only aim was to inflict harm on others.

The government newspaper Al Jumhuriya said Iraq had lost all hope in the United States which was bent on plundering the wealth of other countries annihilating their peoples.

"American leaders, who are carrying out the most vicious crimes against humanity... are poisonous spiders with no concern but murder, dissemination of vice, disease and use of narcotics," the newspaper said in an editorial signed by its editor-in-chief, Salah Al Mukhtar.

Israeli soldier stabbed to death

(Continued from page 1)

Officials said the incident was a "flagrant violation" of the autonomy agreement.

The accord guaranteed the free movement and right to bear arms of Jewish settlers on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

Prior to Tuesday's stabbing, the only deadly attack against Israeli soldiers since the army redeployment on the West Bank began in November took place Jan. 17 when an officer and an enlisted man were shot and killed in an ambush near the southern West Bank city of Hebron.

Army officials blamed that attack on the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine.

Jenin was the scene of another deadly incident on

the eve of historic Palestinian elections on Jan. 20, when Israeli soldiers shot and killed three Hamas activists who fired at them at a checkpoint just outside the town.

Hamas has vowed to take revenge against Israelis for the Jan. 5 assassination by presumed Israeli agents of Yahya Ayyash, mastermind of a suicide bombing campaign that killed 45 Israelis in 1994 and 1995 in a bid to undermine the peace process.

But the movement has not carried out any major attacks since August and recently reached a reconciliation agreement with the PNA that reportedly included a pledge not to undermine the peace process by launching attacks from PNA-controlled territory.

Jordan, Anadrako sign oil and gas exploration memo

By Lola Keilani
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources has signed a JD 20 million letter of intent with the U.S. company Anadrako to explore for gas and oil in the Bazalt area in the north-east of the Kingdom.

The agreement was signed by Samih Darwazah, minister of Energy and Mineral Resources, and the representative of the Anadrako company.

Anadrako, which has been conducting a feasibility study to build a gas pipeline between Aqaba and the Rishah gas field, is the second U.S. oil company after Transglobal to sign a letter of intent with the Jordanian government. Transglobal's letter of intent covers drilling for oil and gas in the Dead Sea area.

Other oil companies are expected to sign oil and gas prospecting agreements with the Jordanian government after they analyse geological and geophysical information supplied to them by the Natural Resources Authority (NRA).

Mr. Darwazah has said that he expects U.S. firms to sign oil and gas concessions and oil ventures covering almost half the country.

Mr. Darwazah told the Jordan Times Tuesday that the letter of intent has to go through Parliament to become final. He added that he expects the Parliament to ratify the document.

Jordan is increasing its gas production at the Rishah gas field, covering an area of 7,000 square kilometres, to 35 million cubic feet of natural gas per day, said Khalid Daghestani, director of the NRA.

Current production from the Rishah gas field is 30 million cubic feet per day, which helps Jordan generate 12 per cent of country's electric needs. With the increase in production, expected to start in three months, the country will produce up to 15 per cent of the Kingdom's electric power, said Khalid Daghestani, director of the Petroleum Exploration Department at the NRA.

Gas from the field is fed to four turbines with a capacity of 30 megawatts each.

Jordanian Businessmen Association highlights investment climate

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Jordanian Businessmen Association (JBA) has just published a book entitled: Investment Climate in Jordan, highlighting recent economic indicators and investment prospects in the Kingdom.

The 144-page book tackles in some detail various aspects of the Jordanian economy especially industry, tourism, transportation, communication, construction, medical services, energy, mining and free zones. The book outlines the economic adjustment programme, the five-year development plan (1993-1997), the stock exchange market, the banking sector, the labour force, the exchange and interest rates as well as

the investment promotion regulations, income tax, sales tax, projects available for investment and investment services.

The objective of the book, according to a JBA statement, is to serve as a means to enhance wider understanding of the Jordanian economy and to project the role of the private sector.

It said that the main sectors of the economy were discussed and the opportunities for investment explored, noting that the book provides a detailed review of the relevant laws, regulations and instructions pertaining to investment activities and facilities and exemptions, allowance and incentives for investors among other important sub-

jects. The JBA was established in 1985 as an independent non-profit organisation with the objective of establishing and maintaining a business climate that enables the private sector to play its role in promoting economic and social development in Jordan.

The JBA embraces a wide spectrum of well-reputed entrepreneurs comprising about 350 members of the senior Jordanian businessmen who are active in fields ranging from industry to banking and tourism. JBA conducts its activities in cooperation with the Federation of Jordanian Chambers of Commerce and the Amman Chamber of Industry.

Egypt aims to double tourism within 5 years

CAIRO (AFP) — Egypt aims to almost double the number of tourists to the country within the next five years to close to six million a year, Prime Minister Kamal Al Ganzouri has said.

"The tourism plan is to reach 5.8 million visitors and 41 million tourist-nights and raise tourist income to \$5.3 million a year within these five years," Mr. Ganzouri told parliament, quoted by the state news agency MENA.

Egypt welcomed 3.13 million tourists in 1995, up 21 per cent from the previous year and the first time the number passed three million since Muslim militants began an armed campaign to topple the government.

Egypt's hotels showed a total of 20.5 million tourist-nights in 1995, up 32 per cent from the year before.

Income from tourism in 1995 was \$2.2 billion but crashed to \$1.3 billion in 1993 and \$1.5 billion in 1994. The tourism minister has predicted that the vital source of foreign currency will top back over \$2 billion in 1995.

Meanwhile, the new president of the Suez Canal has vowed to push ahead with development projects and introduce new price cuts to keep the canal the cheapest commercial waterway in the world.

EU proposes union of world banks

ABU DHABI (AFP) — The European Union (EU) is proposing the creation of a group comprising banks worldwide to bolster cooperation among them and ensure stability in the international market, Arab bankers said Tuesday.

The EU made the proposal in a letter sent recently to the Beirut-based Union of Arab Banks (UAB), which groups most banks in the region, UAB said.

"The letter asked for organising joint banking symposiums and conferences and increasing cooperation between EU banks and those in the Arab World," UAB said in its first monthly bulletin, obtained here.

"It also contained a proposal for the establishment of an International Banking Union grouping EU, Asian, American and Arab banks with the aim of consolidating stability in the world banking market."

The report gave no details of the project or say whether UAB had agreed on the idea, the first to be floated by the EU.

UAB comprises 230 Arab banks and joint banking units

with foreign investors, and its assets exceeded \$1 trillion at the end of 1994.

A UAB report said the assets of \$1.068 billion were the highest in Arab banking history after they surged by 32.2 per cent over 1993.

It said an increase in the capital of several regional banks in line with official instructions boosted the average adequacy of Arab banks to 14.8 per cent, far higher than the eight per cent floor recommended by the Bank for International Settlement (BIS) for banks worldwide.

BIS decided on the adequacy, the ratio between shareholders' equity and assets, to ensure world banks have enough funds to face financial crises.

A breakdown showed the Bahraini-based Arab Bank, owned by Kuwait, Libya and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), was the biggest Arab bank in 1994 in terms of assets, which stood at \$19.5 billion.

It was followed by the Saudi National Commercial Bank, with assets of \$18.5 billion, the Egyptian Al Ahli Bank with \$14.8 billion and the Amman-based Arab Bank, with \$14.4 billion.

Moscow and Tokyo most expensive for business travel

BRUSSELS (R) — Business travellers trying to keep down the costs should steer clear of Moscow, Tokyo, Buenos Aires and Hong Kong and head instead for Belarus and Albania, a survey on business travel showed Tuesday.

The survey, conducted by Eurocost-Luxembourg, found Russia's capital to be the most expensive city in the world for business travellers with a day and a night costing an average of \$543.

Tokyo was a close second at \$516, followed by Buenos Aires at \$468 and Hong Kong at \$450. Copenhagen, rounding off the top five, was the Europe Union's most expensive city, costing \$427 for a day and a night stop off.

At the other end of the

scale, the survey indicated that plenty of deals awaited the truly cost conscious business traveller in Belarus, Albania, Armenia, Lithuania and Western Samoa.

A day and a night in Minsk costs just \$125, the survey said, \$1 less than in Tirana, Yerevan (\$132), Vilnius (\$138) and Apia (\$140) completed the bottom five run of cheap cities.

Eurocost said it had published its "Business Travel Expenses Guide" to help companies establish a reliable system of checking on travel costs. The guide costs 350 European Currency Units (\$400).

"(Businesses) can either use the data to grant expenses before a business trip, or to set a maximum limit to

which expenses will be reimbursed," it said.

To come up with figures for 114 cities, Eurocost said it collected the prices for a night in a four- or five-star hotel, lunch, dinner, taxi fares, telephone calls, drinks in a hotel bar, laundry of one shirt and a daily newspaper.

Hotels, not surprisingly, were the main factor in cost, with a four- or five-star costing \$390 a night in Moscow, \$359 in Tokyo and \$341 in Buenos Aires.

Cities with the cheapest hotels — Vilnius (\$73), Apia (\$93) and Gambia's Banjul (\$95) — had something of an unfair advantage as, according to Eurocost, they have no four- or five-star hotels.

Eurocost also noted that in Thilisi, Georgia, a night in

the city's "magnificent" but only business hotel costs just (\$264) — including a candle as there is rarely electricity at night.

Dinner — main dish, dessert, coffee and half a bottle of wine — was most expensive in Copenhagen at \$68 followed by Oslo (\$63), Seoul (\$59), Moscow (\$56) and Tokyo (\$55).

It was cheapest in Yerevan, at \$5.

Overall costs for a day and a night in well-known cities included: Geneva (\$384), Berlin (\$376), Brussels (\$356), London (\$352), New York (\$342), Paris (\$328), Beijing (\$323), Sydney (\$315), Cape Town and Mexico City (\$303), Bangkok (\$300), Kiev (\$286), Rome (\$274) and Barcelona (\$218).

Investments in GCC bourses exceed \$25b

ABU DHABI (AFP) — More than 250 joint-stock companies trade their shares in Arab Gulf states, with their capital exceeding \$25 billion at the end of 1995, an official report has said.

The total joint-stock firms in the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) stood at 343, of which 254 trade their shares in the stock market. Their paid-up capital was estimated at \$25.7 billion at the end of 1995.

Saudi Arabia, by far the biggest GCC member, accounted for more than half their capital, with 76 companies and investments of \$15 billion, according to the official Emirates news agency WAM.

Kuwait had 41 companies with a capital of \$5.9 billion and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) had 34 firms with a capital of \$2.1 billion. The rest are based in the remaining members — Oman, Qatar and Bahrain.

WAM, quoting a report by the Kuwait-based Arab Corporation for Investment Guarantee, put the combined

capital of all GCC joint-stock companies at \$31.6 billion, of which more than half is owned by governments.

The capital of the firms trading their shares is far lower than their market capitalisation of around \$80 billion. This is due to a steady increase in the prices of shares of most trading institutions over the past few years.

Despite such a high capital, turnover in the GCC bourses has remained as low as \$300 million a week, most of which is recorded in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait.

Dealers said the low turnover was because governments do not trade, dealing is confined to nationals in most exchanges, and traders tend to keep shares as a long-term investment to ensure a fixed income.

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THE Daily Crossword by Kenneth Wittle

ACROSS

- El — TX
- "Woe is me!"
- Zagreb native
- Touched down
- Savoir-faire
- Actress Hope
- Thaw
- Mah-jongg piece
- Aquatic animal
- Emulated Julia Child?
- Bill of fare
- Pasture
- Main/Kilbride movie
- Formal dresses
- The Boston —
- Degree for ABA members: abbr.
- Take — it comes
- Strain at the —
- Speaker's stand
- "— Miserables"
- Clairvoyant
- "To be go-between"
- USA
- Vamish
- ingredient
- Flatfish
- Short-lived
- Indolence
- Indonesian island
- Type of school, belny
- Blender product
- "— a man with seven wives."
- Adm. Zumwalt
- Ranked
- confeians
- Meeting abbr
- Crucifix

DOWN

- Jack of clubs
- Gunnness
- Farm structure
- Cushioned footstools
- Minister to
- Incapacitated
- Rights gp.
- in (intervene)
- Where skeletons are kept
- Drumbeat
- Hip
- Ripening factor
- Time in office
- Berry and Wahl
- Hebrew letter
- Sacred song
- Overlowng
- Separately
- Ring results
- S.A. plain
- T.S.E. name
- Hodges of baseball
- Time zone
- Parasite
- Moray
- Cola alternative
- Hits heavily
- Make eyes at
- Tickled pink
- Tropical fibers
- , no runs, no errors
- Egyptian vipers
- Chimney
- Traditional knowledge
- Heron kin
- Tulle
- Guthrie
- Verne character
- Group of seals

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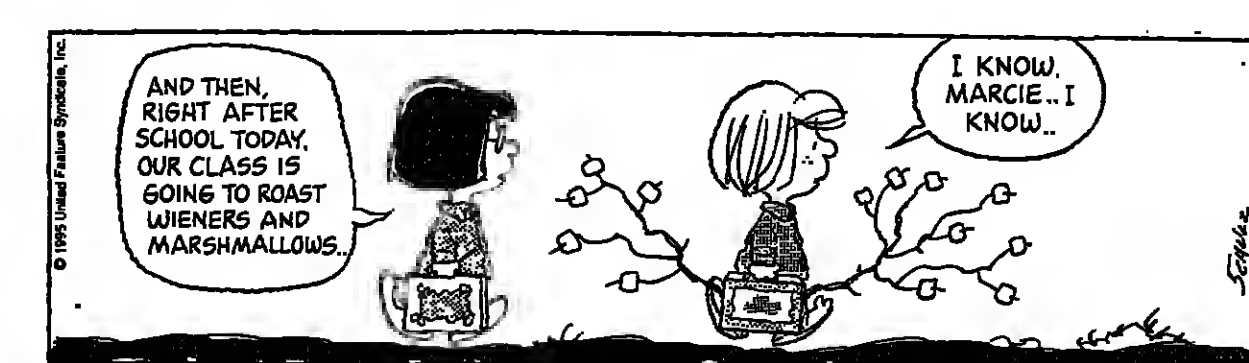
Yesterday's puzzle solved

S	A	I	S	E	I	O	I	O	T	M	I	C	A
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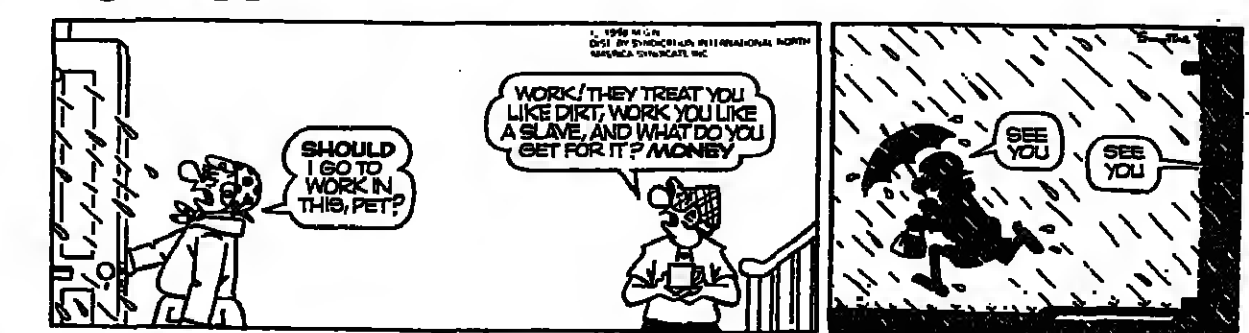
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Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



HOROSCOPE FORECAST FOR WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 31, 1996

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Do not follow the advice of friends who are dramatic and do not have their feet on the ground, and avoid getting into trouble.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Although outside duties may seem annoying to you today, be sure to handle them wisely and avoid trouble.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) You are anxious to get off to some new kind of pleasure today but you would find that it is very disappointing.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) You are tempted to disagree with a higher-up or dispute over some business deal, but this would be wrong for you.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Although you do not like what an outside partner is doing, don't take to task as yet but watch development carefully.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) This is not a good day to make changes in routines, so carry on as usual and you accomplish a good deal.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) You feel like dashing off to some pleasure today, but this could cost you a great deal in more ways than one.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) When you are at home, show him more devotion, and don't try to be selfish. Try not to invite a guest in who could cause you trouble.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) You may receive a message which could drive you mad, but take it easy and you win the game. Be careful in motion while on the highway.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 21) Take care in handling financial affairs or you could lose quite a bundle. Avoid one who has an axe to grind.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Try not to be different so that others will not criticise you. Don't lambast one who is not doing things right.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Be more optimistic about those problems you have; handle them objectively, and they are soon behind you.

Birthstone of January: Garnet — Rose Quartz

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Transport operators gear up to start Jordan-Israel traffic

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Transport operators in Jordan and Israel are gearing up to start operating direct air and land routes between the two countries in March, when the transport accord signed by them in January takes effect.

The Council of Ministers endorsed the agreement this week, and officials are awaiting a Royal Decree approving the accord to give the green signal to private sector companies poised to start bus and taxi services and at least one Israeli and one Jordanian airline companies to launch shuttle flights between Amman and Tel Aviv.

The agreement stipulates that actual transport operations could begin in 30 to 45 days after the Royal Decree is issued approving the

accord, which also opens the door for Jordanians and Israelis to drive private vehicles into each other's territory.

Jordan and Israel have opened two direct border crossings, the Wadi Araba point in the south and the Sheikh Hussein Bridge in the north, but passengers now have to change vehicles at both frontier posts, a process that often takes up to an hour.

The quick moves to introduce direct transport between the two countries are seen as reflecting the two governments' keen interest in developing close ties as opposed to the cold relationship between Egypt and Israel despite the signing of a peace accord between them 17 years ago.

Israeli Prime Minister Shi-

mon Peres recently described the transport agreement in particular as revolutionary in that it is one of the keys to increased flow of people and goods between the two countries and contribute to trade, tourism and close interaction between Jordanians and Israelis.

Royal Jordanian, the Kingdom's flag-carrier, has taken the initiative to set up the new Royal Wings company, which hopes to launch five-times weekly shuttle flights between Amman and Tel Aviv.

Details of the equity division and the type of aircraft the company would operate were not immediately available, but the firm expects to start Amman-Tel Aviv operations by April.

The Amman-Tel Aviv flight will take about 20 minutes, a dramatic cut-down in

the nearly four hours it now takes for an overland trip across the northern Sheikh Hussein Bridge over the River Jordan.

Arkia, a privately owned Israeli airlines, is also preparing to start Amman-Tel Aviv flights around the same time, said Shalom Touregman, second secretary at the Israeli embassy in Amman.

However, the focus will be on land transport, said Mr. Touregman. "The one question that every Israeli is asking is 'when can we drive our own cars across the bor-

der to Jordan?'" he said. Israeli businessmen are also "looking forward to increased movement of goods," Mr. Touregman added, referring to the clause in the Jan. 18 accord for direct transport of cargo-bearing trucks between the two countries.

Mohammad Rashid, a senior official at the Amman-based Arabella Transport Company, said hundreds of private operators had applied for licences to ply on direct bus routes between Jord-

anian and Israeli towns such as Amman and Tel Aviv, Amman and Nazareth, Irbid and Haifa, and Aqaba and Eilat.

The flood of applications led to a compromise that all the operators get together and form one public shareholding company with a capital of JD 10 million.

At least two other local companies, in addition to the Jordan Express Tourism Transport (JETT), are also expected to launch direct bus services between Amman and Israeli cities.

Israel's Teva in accord to acquire Biocraft

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (R) — Israel's Teva Pharmaceutical Industries took a big step forward in its overseas expansion Monday, announcing it had reached an agreement to acquire U.S. generic drug maker Biocraft Laboratories Inc in a stock swap.

The acquisition will boost Teva, Israel's biggest drug company, to eight per cent from five per cent of the U.S. generic drug market. Teva's U.S. subsidiary Lemmon Co. and Biocraft together would have annual sales of \$390 million.

Biocraft shareholders will receive 0.461 Teva American depositary shares (ADS) for each share of Biocraft common stock.

Based on the closing price

of Teva's ADS on Jan. 26, Biocraft shareholders would get a value of \$20.86 per share of Biocraft stock.

Biocraft shares jumped 5 3/8 to 19 in morning trading.

Completion of the transaction, which has been approved by the boards of directors of both companies, is subject to regulatory approval and the approval of Biocraft shareholders.

Ron Weisberg of IBI Investment House in Israel said this was a positive step for Teva. "It shows that Teva's management knows exactly what it wants and it does everything to expand activity," said Mr. Weisberg.

Sharon Korman of Societe General Strauss Turnbull Securities in London noted

that Biocraft's earnings fell from \$6.1 million in 1994 to a loss of \$2.4 million last year.

Teva officials told analysts the stock swap, expected to be completed in the second quarter, will not dilute company earnings in 1996.

"Teva's acquisitions have always been extremely thoughtful. They don't take risks," Ms. Korman said.

She said there was little overlap between products, noting Biocraft has a large share of the generic antibiotics market.

Teva paid about twice Biocraft's 1995 sales of \$140.9 million, she said.

Biocraft's main stockholders, Harold and Beatrice Snyder and certain trusts set up by the Snyders, have already agreed to vote their shares in approval of the merger.

The Snyders and the trusts own about 60 per cent of Biocraft common stock.

The combined U.S. operations will be headed by William Fletcher, Lemmon president and chief executive officer.

"We believe that the acquisition of Biocraft will broaden our product line, expand distribution, increase manufacturing capacity, particularly of antibiotic raw materials, thereby strengthening Teva's competitive position in the growing worldwide generic pharmaceutical market," Mr. Fletcher said.

LONDON EXCHANGE RATES

LONDON (R) — Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against the dollar on the London foreign exchange and bullion markets Tuesday.

One U.S. dollar	1.3790/00	Canadian dollar	1.4828/38
		Deutsche marks	1.6604/14
		Dutch guilders	1.2060/70
		Swiss francs	30.50/54
		French francs	5.0940/90
		Belgian francs	159.77/72
		Italian lire	166.66/76
		Japanese yen	6.9520/30
		Norwegian crowns	6.5080/90
		Danish crowns	5.7346/46
		Singapore dollars	1.4192/02
		Australian dollars	0.7425/35
		Hong Kong dollars	7.7325/35

One sterling \$1.5054/64
One ounce of gold \$406.10/406.60

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Business

A review of news from the Arabic press

Hammamat Ma'in struggles to avoid liquidation as a result of large losses

ACCUMULATED LOSSES of the Jordan Tourism and Spa Complex Company (Hammamat Ma'in) have reached JD 9.37 million after recording a JD 575,000 loss in fiscal 1994. The loss in 1993 was JD 528,000. The accumulated losses are exposing the company for obligatory liquidation in accordance with the Companies' Law which stipulates such an action whenever losses at any company reach double its capital. Fighting to avoid such a fate, the board of directors submitted a study to the minister of finance to remedy the company's situation but discussions with officials from the ministry did not produce any solution. Another study was conducted by an audit firm, at the request of the minister, and after debating it by a committee that was formed for finalising a report on the company, a set of recommendations were agreed for implementation. The suggestions involved various expansions and upgrading of facilities as well as improved services and maintenance. The company's total indebtedness at the end of 1994 stood at JD 14.5 million of which JD 6.3 million were due to the Ministry of Finance which, as a guarantor for the company, had to repay loans which the company could not settle due to cash problems. The indebtedness also includes JD 7.3 million of loans guaranteed by the Ministry of Finance (Al Ra'i + Al Aswaq).

Industrial Development Bank boosts net profit by 118% to JD 4.8m

EARLY RESULTS indicate that the Industrial Development Bank (IDB) boosted net profit after allocations by a record 118 per cent to JD 4.8 million last year. Net profit at the end of 1994 was JD 2.2 million. IDB General Manager Rajab Al Saad said this large increase was due to higher income, which grew from JD 4.7 million in 1994 to JD 7.3 million in 1995, and to rationalisation in spending which reduced administrative and general expenses from JD 2.2 million in 1994 to JD 1.9 million in 1995. The bank's total assets increased from JD 124 million in 1994 to JD 135 million in 1995 due to credits to industrial and tourism projects rising from JD 91 million to JD 101 million. Shareholders' equity grew from JD 16 million (in 1994) to JD 28 million last year due to higher reserves and the increase in capital.

The IDB extended 137 loans amounting to JD 21 million last year. Of the loans, 97 totalling JD 15 million were to finance industrial projects, 22 totalling JD 5 million were to finance tourism projects and 18 loans totalling JD 1 million were to finance service projects related to the industrial and tourism sectors. Mr. Saad indicated that the projects would cost JD 63 million to be set up and that they would generate JD 25 million in added value to the national income. The projects would provide 1,250 job opportunities. Mr. Saad added. He noted that the IDB extended JD 400,000 through 53 loans to craftsmen and other small workshops throughout the Kingdom (Al Ra'i).

Housing Bank generates JD 9.45 million net profit from 1995 operations

PRELIMINARY FIGURES show that the Housing Bank generated JD 9.45 million of net profit last year, 89 per cent or JD 4.4 million more than the figure in 1994. Total deposits at the end of 1995 amounted to JD 884.3 million about JD 62 million higher from the total at the end of 1994. Loans and credit facilities surged from JD 524.2 million at the end of 1994 to JD 604.3 million at the end of 1995. The bank's total assets grew by 14 per cent to JD 1,108 million. An official source at the bank said the Housing Bank has become the first among Jordanian banks in terms of shareholders' equity which jumped from JD 43.9 million in 1994 to JD 77.8 million at the end of last year. As such, the reserves have reached more than double the bank's capital of JD 25 million. The Housing Bank has 117 branches throughout the Kingdom (Al Dustour).

Financial Markets

Exchange Rate Bulletin
Date: 30/1/1996

Currency	1 MYR	3 MYR	6 MYR	12 MYR
U.S. Dollar	5.25	5.18	5.06	4.93
Sterling Pound	6.06	6.00	5.93	5.93
Deutsche Mark	3.31	3.28	3.12	3.12
Swiss Franc	1.62	1.62	1.62	1.62
French Franc	4.08	4.18	4.18	4.18
Japanese Yen	0.25	0.31	0.37	0.43
European Currency Unit	4.79	4.70	4.65	4.62

Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin
Date: 30/1/1996

Currency	Bid	Offer
U.S. Dollar	0.7080	0.7100
Sterling Pound	1.0665	1.0718
Deutsche Mark	0.4774	0.4798
Swiss Franc	0.5859	0.5888
French Franc	0.1388	0.1395
Japanese Yen	0.6639	0.6663
Dutch Guilder	0.4254	0.4275
Swedish Krona	0.0443	0.0445
Italian Lira	0.0443	0.0445
Belgian Franc	0.0443	0.0445

Other Currencies
Date: 30/1/1996

Currency	Bid	Offer
Israeli Sheqel	1.8620	1.8780
Lebanese Lira	0.04425	0.044825
Saudi Riyal	0.1870	0.1898
Kuwaiti Dinar	2.3070	2.3670
Qatari Riyal	0.1932	0.1945
Egyptian Pound	0.2163	0.2200
Omani Riyal	1.8350	1.8410
UAE Dirham	0.1922	0.1933
Greek Drachma	0.2735	0.3085
Turkish Lira	1.4365	1.5055

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Magic Johnson rejoins Lakers

LOS ANGELES (AFP) — Basketball star "Magic" Johnson returned to the Los Angeles Lakers Monday at age 36, saying he is raring to play and unbowed by the HIV virus that sidelined him in 1991.

"I'm in full tilt," Johnson told reporters after a practice session with teammates. "No matter what happens I'm in here all the way. This is it. There ain't no going back, no turning back."

He will reportedly earn \$2.5 million dollars for a contract that runs through the 1996 season.

After learning he had contracted the virus which causes the deadly affliction AIDS, Johnson retired from the Lakers in 1991, a step which he grew to regret since his heart never left the game.

In the years since he stepped down from the Lakers, reports of his returning to the powerful team have been as frequent as Elvis sightings and Johnson confessed to wanting to take the step a long time ago.

"I have been disappointed and frustrated I didn't do it before, because I have been playing so much since then anyway," said Johnson. "Now I'm happy, I'm back and I'm doing what I love to do. I am peace with myself."

Johnson — five years older and a muscular 27 pounds heavier — will don his familiar jersey number 32 when he plays his first National Basketball Association game since June 1991 on Tuesday here against Golden State.

Johnson, who led the Lakers to five league crowns, played on the 1992 Olympic Dream Team and in the 1992 NBA All-Star Game. A comeback bid was shelved when other players complained he put them at risk for getting the AIDS virus.

He has played without incident for years now, but was barred from playing in Taiwan in October because of the HIV virus.

NBA Commissioner David Stern has sought to educate players and the public about the real risks and now, Johnson said, Stern's work is done.

"I'm not worried. Everybody is educated now," Johnson said. "They don't have to think all of those crazy thoughts. It's time to go to work now."

"I should have been back (in the league) a long time ago. I think the time is right. The Lakers are playing well right now. I think they are doing a tremendous job," he said of the reasons for his return.

"But the main reason, I think, is that Cookie and I have prayed on it, and God has been blessing me. So it's time to come back."

"I don't think I went out the way I wanted to go out before. And that's the reason I'm back."

But he was quick to note that he comes back at the invitation of his teammates at a time when the Lakers are strong and winning and with the knowledge that he is not the same player he once was.

"I don't have to be the greatest player. That's in the past. It's four years later... I know I'm five steps slower. But he hook shot's still there. I've got power. I know what to do. I know what not to do."

"I'm not coming back thinking I am going to be Magic Johnson at the age of 36. I would be stupid. But I am coming back with respect that I still know how to play this game."

Also, he said, he knows his role has changed, and that he has gone from passer to guard, to team coach and now to "point forward."

A chronological look at the life and basketball career of Magic Johnson, who returned to the Los Angeles Lakers on Monday after retiring in 1991 with the virus which causes AIDS:

1959 — Born on August 14 in Lansing, Michigan.

1979 — Guided Michigan State University to the U.S. collegiate national championship; turns professional after sophomore season; selected by the Los Angeles Lakers with the first overall choice in the National Basketball Association draft.

1980 — Magic Johnson plays every position in the deciding game of the NBA finals, leading the Lakers to a sixth-game victory over Philadelphia for the title. He scored 42 points, pulled down 15 rebounds and passed out seven assists and sealed his place in history by becoming the only rookie ever to be named the NBA Finals Most Valuable Player.

November 18, suffers torn



Earvin "Magic" Johnson shoots during a workout with the Los Angeles Lakers. Johnson said he will rejoin the Lakers' January 30 against the Golden State Warriors (Reuters photo)



Earvin "Magic" Johnson is surrounded by reporters and cameras during a January 29 press conference announcing that he will return to play for the Los Angeles Lakers (Reuters photo)

cartilage in his left knee and is sidelined for 45 games. Lakers go 28-17 without him.

1981 — Magic sets club record with 3.43 steals a game, which leads the league. On November 19, Pat Riley replaces Paul Westhead as coach of the Lakers.

1982 — Lakers beat Philadelphia four games to two for Johnson's second NBA crown.

1983 — Johnson leads NBA with 10.5 assists a game and is named to All-NBA team, but Lakers are swept by Philadelphia in NBA finals.

1984 — Johnson averages a club-record 13.1 assists a game to lead the league, with a club record of 12 in one quarter against Seattle on February 21. On May 15, Johnson sets an NBA playoff record with 24 assists in one game against Phoenix. The Lakers lose to Boston in a seven-game NBA final.

1985 — Johnson sets an NBA record by averaging 17 assists in one playoff series, helping the Lakers breeze past Portland on their way to beating Boston 4-2 in the NBA finals.

1986 — Johnson leads NBA with 12.6 assists and becomes the first man to receive one million votes in All-Star balloting.

1987 — Johnson named Most Valuable Player of regular season and finals, leading the Lakers to 4-2 victory

over Boston in NBA finals. 1988 — Lakers become first club to win three straight seven-game series on their way to the title, beating Detroit in seven in the finals.

1989 — Johnson becomes only player to Lakers' history to lead the NBA in free throw percentage, hitting 91.1 per cent, and earns NBA MVP honors. But a hamstring injury slows him in the playoffs and the Lakers are swept by Detroit in the finals. On November 19, he sets a club record with 24 assists against Denver.

1990 — Johnson named All-Star Game Most Valuable Player but Lakers ousted by Phoenix in second round, earliest playoff departure since 1981.

1991 — Johnson becomes NBA all-time assist leader with 9,888. Lakers fall to Chicago 4-1 in NBA finals. Johnson plays his final NBA game June 12.

November 7: Johnson announces his retirement after being diagnosed with HIV, the virus that causes AIDS. Lakers win a season-best nine games in a row after his announcement.

1992 — February 9: Scored 25 points in NBA All-Star Game, named its Most Valuable Player after helping West to 153-115 triumph.

Was a member of the U.S. Olympic "Dream Team" that won a gold medal at the Barcelona Games.

Made a comeback attempt with the Lakers, but protests from other players helped convince him to end his hest and remain retired. He joined NBC as a television analyst.

1993 — Worked as a television analyst and assembled an all-star team that made U.S. and world tours.

1994 — Replaced fired Randy Pfund and interim Bill Bertka as coach of the Lakers. Johnson guided Lakers to 5-11 finish to 33-49 season. Ends TV commentary duties.

June 27: Becomes vice president and minority owner of the Lakers.

1995 — Tours again with all-star selects, although Taiwan bans his entry over HIV status. He tells USA Basketball he wants to be part of the 1996 Olympic team. Agent Lon Rosen denies report he will return after he is noticed practicing with the Lakers.

1996 — January 26: Report breaks that Johnson will return within a week. January 29: Johnson makes it official, selling his five percent stake in team and signing a half-season deal worth a reported \$2.5 million to make his NBA return.

January 30: Scheduled return game for Johnson at home against Golden State. He is scheduled to face Michael Jordan and the Chicago Bulls at home on Friday.

African Nations' Cup

Semifinalists have different motivations

JOHANNESBURG (AFP)

South Africa, Tunisia, Zambia and Ghana reached the last four of the African Nations Cup at the weekend and each team has a different motivation to take the title.

A victory for hosts South Africa, who beat Algeria 2-1 on Saturday, will unite the nation in scenes reminiscent of their 1995 rugby World Cup win on home soil.

But apart from the political advantages for the nation, it would give South Africa utmost respect as a footballing country, which only returned to the international fold in 1992.

Against Algeria, Mark Fish scored first for South Africa. Tarek Lazizi equalised, before "Shoes" Moshoeu hit home the winner at the FNB stadium.

Unfortunately, Leeds United's Phil Masinga picked up a second yellow card to rule him out of the semi-final against Ghana at Johannesburg on Wednesday evening. Ghana's incentive is to clinch an unprecedented fifth African Nations Cup title, and their first since 1982.

Ismael Kurtz's side showed the most class in the group stages, but their 1-0 quarter-final win over Zaire was not of the same standard.

10-man Zaire were determined to kick Ghana off the pitch, though Masinga's Leeds teammate, Anthony Yeboah's 23rd minute winner gave Ghana the last laugh.

Shortly before the goal, Zaire defender Nzele Lembi was sent off in a culmination of Zaire's roughhouse tactics. Lembi headed a ball near the centre circle and as he came down he kicked Torino's Abedi Pele in the back and was immediately dismissed.

Lembi's dismissal was the third of the tournament after Burkina Faso defender Hassane Kamagate and Mozambique keeper Rui Alves.

Meanwhile Tunisia's 4-1 win on penalties against Gabon, following a 1-1 scoreline after extra time, helped make up for Tunisia's disappointment on home soil

two years ago when they lost in their group.

Seldom in the 39-year history of the Cup has a host nation been so humiliated, with the local media blaming preparations which concentrated on European rather than African opposition.

Tunisia have a great incentive, therefore to take the title, quieten the detractors, and beat their previous best performance of second spot in 1965.

Zoubair Beya scored first for Tunisia in the 10th minute, before skipper Brice Mackaya notched up an equaliser from a free-kick six minutes later.

Tunisian keeper Chokri El Ouair performed heroically in the shootout by saving two penalties and scoring the winning kick.

A Zambian victory would also be a fitting memorial to the players who died in a plane crash in April 1993.

Kalusha Bwalya, the tournament's top scorer with five, was in Europe at the time, and escaped the accident which wiped out virtually the whole Zambian squad.

Zambia have looked very impressive so far, scoring 12 goals in four matches, which included a 0-0 draw against Algeria.

They scored three goals in a 30 minute period in their quarter-final on Saturday to oust Egypt 3-1 at Bloemfontein.

Egypt's Samir Kamouna had earlier struck just before the break, but Zambia took advantage of a tactical blunder of Elijah Litana, Vincent Mutale and Dennis Lota all to score.

Egypt's Dutch coach Ruud Krol brought on defender Fawzi Gamal in place of striker Aly Maher in the 56th minute in a tactical manoeuvre to preserve their lead. But, Krol's strategy badly misfired as Zambia scored three goals in the next 20 minutes.

Bartlett excited at appearance: South Africa's Sean Bartlett, the striker to be called up instead of Phil

Masinga, who has received two yellow cards, looked forward to starting Wednesday's semi-final against Ghana. "I'm excited about the game," Bartlett said at Monday's training. "It's just a pity Phil has to miss out."

Pleimelding backs South Africa:

South Africa received the backing of Ivory Coast coach Pierre Pleimelding, who thought they would win the event if they beat Ghana.

"South Africa have English fighting spirit mixed with skill which is very rare

these days," Pleimelding said. "They have key players in important positions, he added, picking out Neil Tovey, Mark Fish and Eric Tinkler as accomplished ball-winners.

Ghana prefers fish to meat: Ghana's Anthony Yeboah gave South Africa's Mark Fish a tongue-in-cheek compliment at training when he was asked to pick out South Africa's best players. "South Africa have some good players, especially the Fish — he's very good, better than meat!" said Yeboah.

African Nations' Cup factfiles

Factfiles of African Nations' Cup semi-finalists South Africa, Ghana, Zambia and Tunisia:

★ South Africa

Previous results — Cameroon 3-0, Angola 1-0, Egypt 0-1, Algeria 2-1.

Scorers — John "Shoes" Moshoeu, Mark Williams 2, Philemon Masinga, Mart Fish.

No previous appearances.

Rankings — 5 Africa, 29 world.

Coach — Clive Barker.

Nickname — Bafana Bafana (The Boys).

★ Ghana

Previous results — Ivory Coast 2-0, Tunisia 3-1, Mozambique 3-0, Zaire 1-0.

Scores — Abedi Pele 3, Anthony Yeboah 2, Charles Akonnor, Felix Aboagye.

Previous appearances — 1963 winners, 1965 winners, 1968 runners-up, 1970 runners-up, 1978 winners, 1980, 1982 winners, 1984, 1992 runners-up, 1994.

Rankings — 1 Africa, 19 world.

Coach — Ismael Kurtz (Brazil).

Nickname — The Black Stars.

★ Zambia

Previous results — Algeria 0-0, Burkina Faso 5-1, Sierra Leone 4-0, Egypt 3-1.

Scorers — Kalusha Bwalya 5, Dennis Tota 2, Kenneth Malitoli, Mordon Malitoli, Johnson Bwalya, Elijah Litana, Vincent Mutale.

Previous appearances — 1974 runners-up, 1978, 1982 third, 1986, 1990 third, 1992, 1994 runners-up.

Rankings — 4 Africa, 23 world.

Coach — Roald Poulsen (Denmark).

Nickname — Mighty Zambia.

Tunisia

Previous results — Mozambique 1-1, Ghana 1-2, Ivory Coast 3-1, Gabon 1-1 (4-1 penalties).

Scorers — Imed Ben Younes 3, Zoubair Beya, Abdelkader Ben Hassen, hadi Ben Rekhissa.

Previous appearances — 1962 third, 1963, 1965 runners-up, 1978 fourth, 1982, 1994.

Coach — Henri Kaspereczak (Poland).

No nickname.

Wilander and Novacek begin legal fight

LONDON (AFP) — Sweden's triple French Open tennis champion Mats Wilander and Czech Republic's former world number eight Karel Novacek confirmed on Monday they are to take the London based International Tennis Federation (ITF) to court, over allegations the pair tested positive for cocaine at last year's French Open.

According to British Sunday newspaper The News of the World, both men tested positive for cocaine at the 1995 French Open, but are fighting a legal battle with the sports' ruling bodies to have the test results dismissed.

The two players issued a joint statement through their lawyers stating: "Following the events of last week when the ITF acted in ways unacceptable to our clients... proceedings have now been issued in the High Court against the ITF seeking injunctions against them."

"It is hoped that there will be a hearing in Court on Thursday or Friday of this week when the players' grievances will be dealt with by the court. A full and early trial will be sought."

ITF general secretary Deborah Jevans stayed tight-lipped about the revelations, and would only comment:



Sweden's Mats Wilander kicks the ball after losing a point (File photo)

"At this point in time, the ITF position in terms of the rules of procedures is that we cannot comment — what other people say is up to them."

The reports claimed that both Wilander, Novacek, their lawyers and Jevans met at a hotel near Heathrow airport last week to discuss the allegations and also intimated that the ITF kept de-

tails of the test secret for eight months.

Asked whether the meeting with Wilander and Novacek took place, Jevans replied: "I personally cannot confirm or deny that."

"I can say that there will be some form of announcement once the full process of a hearing, if any, and any appeal has been gone through."

Billy Ryan, Wilander's lawyer, claimed the ITF's handling of the case was "scandalous," accused the information of being leaked and said the former French Open champion had not seen the documents he requested. "Mats has done everything they [ITF] asked him to do, but they have not done all they should have done," said Ryan.

IOC awards rights to EBU

GENEVA (R) — The International Olympic Committee (IOC) has awarded the exclusive European rights to screen the winter and summer Olympics between 2000 and 2008 to the European Broadcasting Union (EBU) for a total of \$1.442 billion, an EBU statement said on Tuesday.

The IOC rejected a competing higher bid, valued in news reports at \$2 billion, from a consortium backed by Rupert Murdoch's News Corp, in favour of the Geneva-based EBU.

The agreement covers: The 2000 games in Sydney for \$350 million, the Winter Games in 2002 in Salt Lake City for \$120 million, the 2004 Games (\$394 million), the Winter Games in 2006 for (\$135 million), and the 2008 Games (\$443 million).

SPORTS IN BRIEF

Crown Prince congratulates athlete

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan Tuesday received in his office at the Royal Court Mohammad Falah who won the bronze medal in the 12th International Tae Kwon Do Championship held in the Philippines last November. In congratulating the winner, the Crown Prince urged the Jordanian Tae Kwon Do Federation to exert further efforts in promoting this martial art in the Kingdom. Federation Chairman Issa Reimouni and the federation's Secretary General Majed Mansour were present at the meeting.

Papin faces ankle operation

MUNICH (AFP) — Bayern Munich French international striker Jean-Pierre Papin faces an ankle operation in Marseille on Saturday, it was reported here on Tuesday. A Bayern Munich spokesman said: "It's a just a small matter. It will be up to the doctor whether he can be back in time when the league programme resumes on February 11." Papin was injured before Christmas in a training accident with Lothar Matthaeus. Last week he seemed fine but suddenly he developed a pain in his right ankle. Papin, linked with a million pound move to English Premiership

Boro dismiss Branco rumours

MIDDLESBROUGH (AFP) — Middlesbrough dismissed fresh reports here on Tuesday that Brazilian defender Branco could be joining his compatriot Juninho at the ambitious Premiership Club. Full-back Branco is a free agent, after buying his own contract and is understood to be keen to move to the Riverside Stadium. Boro rejected the alleged interest as "sheer speculation" and chief executive Keith Lamb has raised doubts as to whether 31-year-old Branco would meet the guidelines laid down by the government — even if Boro did want to sign him.

'Christie will run in the Olympics'

LONDON (AFP) — Sprint champion Linford Christie's claims that he will not defend his Olympic 100m title later this year were laughed off by chief rival Donovan Bailey on Tuesday. Bailey, who won the world title in Gothenburg last year, is convinced the British sprint star will be at the start line in Atlanta despite repeated denials. The 28-year-old Canadian said: "He's running. We all know he's running."

leaders Newcastle in the New Year, has been plagued by injury since he joined Munich from AC Milan in 1994.



Doug Edwards of the Vancouver Grizzlies (right) tries to steal the ball from Philadelphia 76ers' Jerry Stackhouse in the second period of NBA action in Philadelphia (Reuters photo)

Anderson lifts Hornets over Cavs

CHARLOTTE, North Carolina (R) — Kenny Anderson made a running 13-footer with six-tenths of a second left to lift the Charlotte Hornets to the .500 mark for the first time in 10 weeks with an 88-86 victory Monday over the Cleveland Cavaliers.

Larry Johnson had 20 points and a season-high 17 rebounds and Matt Geiger added 18 points as the Hornets (21-21) levelled their record for the first time since November 15.

"I was very excited," said Anderson after his game winner. "We let the clock run down to five seconds. It was playground style. That's what I learned on the playgrounds in New York."

Anderson, who came to Hornets earlier this month in a big trade with the New Jersey Nets, had 16 points and six assists as the Hornets shot 48 per cent (33-for-69) from the field.

"We've always said that once we reach the .500 mark, we're just going to keep going from there," said Charlotte swingman Glen Rice, who had nine points and eight rebounds.

"We had extra motivation. Cleveland is a team we are fighting for a playoff spot," Terrell Brandon scored 15 of his 22 points in the first quarter and had seven assists

for Cleveland (22-20). Antonio Lang, who scored 14 points, made a layup to give Cleveland its last lead, 86-84, with 1:01 left.

Johnson made a layup to tie it with 45 seconds to go. Brandon missed a jumper with 21 seconds left and Michael Cage missed a tip before Dell Curry grabbed the rebound and the Hornets called timeout to set up the final play.

"It was a tough loss for us tonight," Cavs coach Mike Fratello said, whose team made just 16 of 25 free throws.

In New York, Patrick Ewing had 35 points and Hubert Davis added 12 of his 19 in the fourth quarter as the Knicks beat the Miami Heat 94-85.

Ewing also grabbed nine rebounds for the Knicks, who have won three straight games and five of their last seven. It was New York's third victory against Miami and former Knicks coach Pat Riley this season.

"He (Ewing) has great games against Miami because he gets single coverage and late double coverage," New York coach Don Nelson said. "He works hard in the middle."

Rex Chapman scored 23 points and Alonzo Mourning added 21 and 13 rebounds for

Miami, losers of 10 of their last 13.

At Utah, Karl Malone had his third 40-point game of the season as the Utah Jazz continued their domination of the Detroit Pistons with a 106-97 victory.

John Stockton added 19 points for the Jazz, who have won six of their last seven games in extending their win streak against Detroit to nine straight.

"Karl had a big game, and he kind of bailed us out again," Utah coach Jerry Sloan said. "He's done that a few times in his career."

Grant Hill scored 34 points for the Pistons, who concluded their four-game road trip with two losses after wins at San Antonio and Dallas.

In Portland, Frank Brickowski scored 10 of his 16 points in the fourth quarter as the Seattle SuperSonics rallied past the Portland Trail Blazers 92-88 for their fifth straight win.

Gary Payton added 21

points for Pacific Division-leading Seattle (31-11), while Clifford Robinson scored 25 points to lead Portland, who have lost three of its last four games.

Arvydas Sabonis pulled Portland (21-22) even at 85-85 with a 10-footer with 2:37 to play. Brickowski gave Seattle the lead for good with a three-pointer from the right wing 20 seconds later.

In Philadelphia, Jerry Stackhouse scored 29 points and Sean Higgins added 27 as the Philadelphia 76ers snapped a nine-game losing streak by holding on for a 103-92 victory over the expansion Vancouver Grizzlies.

Clarence Weatherspoon added 23 points for the 76ers, who averaged a 103-102 overtime loss at Vancouver earlier this month. Philadelphia still has the worst record in the league at 8-34.

Greg Anthony scored 12 points and rookie Bryant Reeves added 16 for the Grizzlies (10-33).

RESULTS

Charlotte	88	Cleveland	86
New York	94	Miami	85
Philadelphia	103	Vancouver	92
Utah	106	Detroit	97
Seattle	92	Portland	88

'Death threat made against Seles'

SYDNEY (R) — Australian tennis officials Tuesday refused to confirm reports that a death threat had been made against joint world number one Monica Seles last week, although police said they were investigating a threat.

Melbourne's Herald Sun newspaper reported on Tuesday that Tennis Australia, organisers of last week's Australian Open, had received an anonymous telephone call last Friday during which Seles' life had been threatened.

Seles had not been told of the threat, the newspaper said. Seles defeated Germany's Anke Huber in the women's singles final the next day.

A statement from Victorian police said they had been alerted by Tennis Australia to a security threat made against an unnamed tennis player during the Australian Open.

The brief statement said extra police had been assigned to tighten security around the player during the tournament.

Victoria police spokesman Kevin Loomes told Reuters that investigations into the threat were continuing.

The Melbourne newspaper report said police had investigated the call and had stationed uniformed police officers

at each entrance to the main stadium of the tournament venue, Melbourne's Flinders Park.

Seles' Australian Open win was her first Grand Slam victory since returning to tennis last August after being stabbed by an obsessed Steffi Graf fan at a tournament in Hamburg in April, 1993.

The Yugoslav-born American broke down and was unable to continue a post-match news conference on Saturday when she was asked if she thought she would ever be able to play in Germany again.

The Herald Sun story quoted tournament director Paul McNamee as saying: "Any concerns that were there were handled low key."

"Secrecy was critical because of possible ramifications had Seles become aware of the threat to her on Saturday as she prepared for the singles final," McNamee was quoted as saying.

McNamee on Tuesday told reporters he could not confirm the report.

Brenda Perry, a tour director with the WTA Tour, the governing body of women's tennis, told Reuters from Tokyo the WTA Tour was not aware of any threat being made against Seles.

Hingis gives Sabatini a Tokyo beating

TOKYO (Agencies) — Swiss teenager Martina Hingis caused the first upset of the \$926,250 Toray Pan Pacific Open tournament on Tuesday by crushing three-time champion Gabriela Sabatini in the first round.

The 15-year-old, a quarter-finalist at the Australian Open last week, relied on her powerful ground strokes and fine return of service on the fast indoor surface to score a 6-3, 6-4 victory over the sixth-seeded Argentinian.

Hingis, who received the WTA Tour Most Impressive New Comer Award last season, made light of her win.

She said: "Maybe it's easier to play one of the seeded players in the first round. You have a chance, you have nothing to lose and you can play your game. I thought Sabatini would play better, she had so many double faults."

Hingis at one stage led the first set 5-1. Her return of service was so punishing that Sabatini, the winner here in 1987, 1991 and 1992, was forced to try and turn up the power, leading to seven double faults in the second set — three on her game points and



Gabriela Sabatini

one on a break point.

The Argentinian forged a 3-1 lead but Hingis broke back in the fifth and then broke again in the seventh.

Seles to focus on singles

Top seed Monica Seles, troubled by a shoulder injury, on Tuesday pulled out of the doubles event at the Pan Pacific Open women's indoor tournament to concentrate on singles play.

Tournament organisers said Seles was worried by the same injury to her left shoulder that she fought through to win the Australian Open singles title last weekend.

Seles suffered a muscle strain to her left shoulder during an early round of the tournament.

Seles' Australian Open win was her first Grand Slam victory since returning to tennis last August after being stabbed by an obsessed Steffi Graf fan at a tournament in Hamburg in April, 1993.

Seles' first match in the Pan Pacific comes on Wednesday in the second round when she plays 21st-

ranked Irina Spirllea of Romania who beat Lori McNeil of the United States 6-3, 6-0 in a first round match on Tuesday.

The 22-year-old Seles had entered the doubles paired with world number six and hometown favourite Kimiko Date of Japan.

In the early rounds of the Australian Open, Seles needed two hours of treatment a day on a groin injury and hired a physiotherapist for the duration of the two-week tournament.

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ANSWERS TO WEEKLY BRIDGE QUIZ

Q. 1 - Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:

AAJ82 722 AAJ1063 AK8

The bidding has proceeded:

SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST

1 2 3 4

What do you bid now?

A - Shame on you if you thought we were trying to trap you! Partner could easily have a major-two-suit, and no bid other than two spades should even be considered.

Q. 2 - As South, vulnerable, you hold:

AQ10982 TR85 0AJ88 AK

The bidding has proceeded:

NORTH EAST SOUTH WEST

1 2 3 4

What do you bid now?

A - With your 12 points and five-card suit, you certainly want to press on to game, especially since you have a valuable card in partner's suit. However, if partner has three spades, it might be better to play in the major suit. Jump to three diamonds to hear again from partner — two diamonds is not forcing!

Q. 3 - As South, vulnerable, you hold:

Q. 4 - As South, vulnerable, you hold:

44 TK105 0AQ1082 0AQ95

The bidding has proceeded:

SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST

1 2 3 4

What do you bid now?

A - An already good hand has been improved by the auction, and no heart raise will do it justice. Start by cue-bidding two spades, then support hearts at your next turn. Partner should get a pretty good picture of your holding.

Q. 4 - Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:

AAK0873 0AQ9 0J82 08

The bidding has proceeded:

SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST

1 2 3 4

What do you bid now?

A - If you choose to stress your spades by rebidding them now, you will never convince partner of the quality of your support for his suit later in the auction. The hand should be much easier to bid if you raise to three hearts now.

Q. 5 - Both vulnerable, as South you hold:

AKQ 0KQJ10883 0KQ7 06

Partner opens the bidding with one spade. What do you respond?

A - While it is hardly conceivable that partner opened the bidding holding one ace, odds are that North has at least two. Ask for aces by bidding four on trump, then commit the hand to five or six hearts, or seven no trump, depending on how many aces partner shows.

Q. 6 - As South, vulnerable, you hold:

AKJ76 0AKJ83 0KQ7 08

Partner opens the bidding with four spades. What action do you take?

A - Unless you play some method we don't know about, partner's opening preempt lies, an opening four-spade bid is a preempt! Denies two aces (Any hand with a good seven- or eight-card suit and an outside ace is good enough for a one-bid.) Pass.

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Post-nuclear Chirac seeks partner in U.S.

PARIS (R) — President Jacques Chirac, fresh from declaring an end to France's bitterly controversial nuclear tests, will propose an equal partnership with the United States in European security on a three-day state visit from Wednesday.

Mr. Chirac will address a joint session of Congress on Thursday and discuss with President Bill Clinton what an aide called "the definition of European and trans-Atlantic security architecture for the 21st century, including the place of Russia."

France has taken the important first step under Mr. Chirac by moving back closer to the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation's (NATO) military organisation, 30 years after General Charles de Gaulle pulled French forces out of the alliance's U.S.-dominated integrated command.

Aides say the new president, who calls De Gaulle as his mentor, realised in the Bosnia crisis that France was depriving itself of political clout by remaining semi-detached from NATO and could gain more influence on decisions by returning to the military committee and attending defence ministers' meetings.

In return, Mr. Chirac wants Washington to accept a new balance in the Atlantic alliance, giving more weight to the European defence pillar and enabling the Europeans to use NATO assets in

operations which the United States chooses not to join.

But U.S. officials said Washington, while welcoming Mr. Chirac's move, remains wary of any "European caucus" that might seek to pre-empt decisions within NATO.

The Pentagon is also concerned about the risk that letting European allies use NATO assets such as U.S. aircraft or airborne surveillance for their own operations might draw Washington into a conflict against its will, they said.

Mr. Chirac, the most pro-American French president and the first to speak fluent in English, will urge Congress to shun isolationism and pay a fairer share of development aid to the Third World.

His call is timed to influence the budget battle between the Clinton administration and the Republican-dominated legislature, aides said, although the spectre of a U.S. default on government debt has been banished by a partial agreement.

On Monday, Mr. Chirac put an end to France's final series of underground nuclear tests in the South Pacific, enabling him to go to Washington as an apostle of disarmament advocating a total ban on all future tests, however small.

The United States welcomed the halt, which followed Saturday's sixth and biggest test, saying it would help efforts to create a global



Jacques Chirac

test ban by autumn.

"Today's announcement in Paris will provide new momentum to our efforts to conclude a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) that can be signed this fall," the White House said.

Mr. Chirac will also call for reinforced cooperation between Americans and Europeans to help solve regional problems, French officials said.

He will urge the United States not to withdraw prematurely from Bosnia, where France and Britain are Washington's major partners in a NATO-led peace implementation force.

He will seek a bigger say for France in Middle East peace efforts, pointing out that the European Union is the biggest aid donor to the region and recalling traditional French ties with Lebanon and Syria.

On Friday, Mr. Chirac goes to Chicago where, in his second major speech, he will outline his vision of balanced economic cooperation between the United States and Europe, pointing to the major role each plays in the other's economy.

Aegean dispute worsens

ATHENS (Agencies) — Greece accused Turkey of violating its airspace and territorial waters as the dispute over an Aegean islet took a new turn for the worse on Tuesday.

Greek Defence Minister Gerassimos Arsenis said Athens had lodged a formal protest with Ankara after "a Turkish frigate and a helicopter" had violated Greek territory in the early hours of the morning.

The islet, "is Greek and it is the duty of Greek armed forces to defend it and are ready to do so," the minister said.

He added Greek forces, ranged from Evros in the north of the Aegean to the southeastern island of Castel-Orizo, "are in a state of complete readiness to counter such a menace to Greek territory."

The Turkish army immediately denied Athens' claims. "The Turkish army is carrying out its normal daily activities in airspace and international waters in the Aegean," a Turkish military official said.

Turkey also demanded Greece withdraw its warships from around the disputed islet where navy vessels from both countries were reportedly facing off.

The Greek ambassador to Ankara was called to the Foreign Ministry where Turkey asked "for the immediate withdrawal of Greek ships" from around the uninhabited rock, the ministry said in a statement.

The statement also called for the withdrawal of Greek troops which it said were on the islet, between the Turkish coast and the Greek island of Kalymnos.

It gave no more details on the alleged troop presence.

Greece and Turkey almost went to war in 1987 over mineral rights in the Aegean. Athens said earlier on Tuesday it had warned a Turkish navy frigate away from waters around the islet, known in Greek as Imia and in Turkish as Kardak.

Mr. Arsenis was holding an urgent meeting Tuesday with Greek Prime Minister Costas Simitis and Foreign Minister Theodore Pangalos to discuss the situation.

The latest dispute between the traditionally-hostile eastern Mediterranean neighbours centres on who owns the islet, about seven kilometres off the Turkish coast.

The rocky islet is one of dozens assigned to Greece under a post-World War II accord — but its small size belies its symbolic image.

Turkey claims the islet is Turkish under an accord with Italy, signed in 1932, which stated all the Aegean islets situated within 18 kilometres of a coast belonged to the nearest country.

Turkey is calling on Greece to open negotiations on its ownership.

At the weekend, Greek officials and Turkish journalists planted the flags of their respective countries on the islet one after another.

Greece then sent a navy vessel there to re-assert its flag. The war of words between Greece and Turkey over the issue heated up on Monday, with Turkish Prime Minister Tansu Ciller saying Ankara would take "every necessary" step unless Athens pulled its troops off the disputed territory.



A Greek frigate leaves the Salamina naval base off the port of Piraeus, bound for the eastern Aegean on Tuesday amid rising tension with Turkey over a rock island in the Aegean (Reuters photo)

Museveni accuses Sudanese of air raids, threatens retaliation

CAIRO (Agencies) — Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni has accused Sudan of carrying out air raids on the bordering state of Moyo and warned that the Kampala government is installing missiles to shoot down Sudanese planes.

Mr. Museveni told the international Arabic daily Al Hayat in an interview published Tuesday that the junta in Khartoum was pursuing its violations of Uganda's territorial integrity with raids by Russian Antonov planes.

He also rejected the idea that the regime of General Omar Al Bashir and Sudanese fundamentalist leader Hassan Tourabi was really founded on "hardline Islamic tendencies."

"Bashir and Tourabi are simply two opportunistic politicians who use Islam to their political ends," Mr. Museveni said in the latest round of an ongoing war of words and mutual accusations over military activity.

"I'm not even sure they are Muslims but I consider that they use Islam to cling to power," he added, citing alleged support by the Khartoum junta for fundamentalist Christian rebels in Uganda's Lord's Resistance Army (LRA).

Kampala broke off diplomatic relations with Sudan early last year.

Khartoum for its part accuses Uganda of backing rebels of the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), who have been fighting since 1983 to free the mainly animist and Christian south from domination by the Islamic Arabised north.

Mr. Museveni again denied this charge in the interview. Following up on mutual threats of direct military confrontation, Mr. Museveni said: "Bashir says he can recruit a million people, I've got two million militiamen who are already combat-trained."

The U.N. Security Council meanwhile began discussions on a draft resolution demanding that Sudan hands over three militants suspected of attempting to kill the Egyptian president.

The draft resolution also notably urges Khartoum to desist from assisting "terrorist" activities and from giving shelter to "terrorist" elements.

Diplomats said that the council was to continue talks on the resolution on Tuesday, following a meeting of non-aligned countries which have put forward the text

with Egypt.

The draft was submitted following a letter to the council from Ethiopia which is seeking the extradition from Sudan of the three suspects sought in connection with the assassination attempt against Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak in Addis Ababa.

"Sudanese Foreign Minister Ali Osman Taha, who travelled to New York last week to urge the Security Council to drop the Ethiopian complaint, told a Cairo newspaper on Monday that the council had refused to listen to Sudan's case."

"While the council gave an opportunity to hear Ethiopia's viewpoint, it refused our request to receive the same treatment," he told the Arabic weekly Al Wasat.

In other Sudan-related developments: Sudanese Agriculture Minister Ahmad Ali Gedaif denied a U.N. report that his country would need food aid in 1996, the government daily Al Engaz Al Watani said.

"Sudan is not threatened by any food shortage and needs no food assistance," it quoted Mr. Gedaif as saying.

Mr. Gedaif said reports of the upcoming need for aid were based on incorrect information.

Iraq woos key U.N. members with lucrative oil deal hopes

DUBAI (R) — Iraq is hoping the United Nations Security Council will be persuaded to lift sanctions against Baghdad by offering attractive oil concession rights to some permanent member states, Gulf-based analysts said on Tuesday.

Russia, France and China have each been courted by Baghdad with contracts to rehabilitate and develop Iraqi oilfields, which can be put into effect only when U.N. sanctions imposed on Iraq since its August 1990 invasion of Kuwait are lifted.

"All three countries have been very active in Iraq... the (oil) fields are a clear incentive for them to support Iraq's determination to make the Security Council remove sanctions," a Bahrain-based analyst who declined to be named said.

Iraq has the world's second largest oil reserves and, unlike its Gulf rival Saudi Arabia, has invited foreign firms to develop more than 10 fields under production-sharing and service contracts, Iraqi officials said.

Baghdad is also hoping

that the prospect of international oil firms earning a stake in Iraq's oil potential may also lead to diplomatic support in talks next Tuesday at U.N. headquarters in New York on a special oil-for-food scheme, analysts say.

Iraq and U.N. officials are due to discuss a plan under which sanctions would be partly lifted to allow Baghdad to sell \$2 billion of its oil over six months to buy food, medicine and other necessities.

"Russia and France are doing themselves no harm by showing support now for Iraq's request to sell oil for humanitarian aid," an analyst in the region said.

Iraq's National Assembly has ratified a wide-ranging accord with Russia that will see Russian firms develop the massive West Qurna and North Rumaila oilfields when sanctions are lifted.

Moscow is also being promised contracts to build a natural gas pipeline running between north and south Iraq, for the supply of equipment to existing but war-damaged fields, oil refineries and export facilities, Iraqi officials say.

The giant West Qurna field alone, located to the east of the southern city of Basra, is estimated to have the potential to produce more than 700,000 barrels per day (bpd).

West Qurna exports could help to pay off Baghdad's estimated \$7 billion to Moscow.

Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Viktor Posuvalyuk was in Baghdad earlier this month and pressed the Iraqi leadership to consider the U.N. oil-for-food scheme in return for Moscow's help in softening its implementation, diplomats said.

French oil firm ELF Aquitaine began talks with Iraq in 1991 and has reached an understanding to develop the Majnoon oilfield when sanctions are lifted, although Iraqi officials stress that no formal agreement has yet been signed.

Paris-based company Total S.A. has reached a similar position in regard to the Nahr Umar oilfield, while firms from Italy and Spain are also edging towards posi-

(Continued on page 7)

Syria to modify Lebanon water accord

BEIRUT (AFP) — Damascus has agreed to modify a 1994 accord and give Beirut a greater share of the waters of the Assi (Orontes) River which rises in Lebanon to flow through Syria into Turkey, government sources said.

Lebanese Minister of Hydraulic Resources Elias Hobeika was to hold talks Wednesday with Syrian officials in Damascus, they said. The 571-kilometre-long Assi flows northwards from Mount Hermon in northeast Lebanon and into Syria until it ultimately reaches the Mediterranean through the Turkish territory of Antioch. It has a total flow of 400 million cubic metres between Lebanon and Syria. It runs through 30 kilometres of Lebanese territory before entering Syria where it completes most of its remaining journey.

Syrian President Hafez Al Assad, despite opposition from some members of his government, gave into Lebanese wishes that the agreement be modified to give Lebanon more water, a government source told AFP.

On Monday Prime Minister Rafik Hariri told reporters Lebanon had not rubber-stamped the September 1994 accord and that Mr. Hobeika would go to Damascus to discuss the points of disagreement.

The 1994 accord stipulated that Lebanon would obtain 20 per cent of the waters of the Assi, or some 80 million cubic metres of water annually.

But Lebanon wants to exclude from the water-sharing agreement the flow of some of the springs which feed the Assi, namely the Labwe tributary which has a flow of 60 million cubic metres.

Otherwise Lebanon would be set to lose 48 million cubic metres of water each year, the government sources said.

Lebanon also wants to ensure that rain waters and other sources of water that flow into the Assi would be kept out of the water-sharing agreement.

Including them would set a "precedent which Israel could exploit to its own advantage" when the time comes for the Jewish state to discuss sharing the region's precious water resources with Syria and Lebanon, the source said.

Candidacy registration begins for Iran election

TEHRAN (AFP) — Candidates began registering Tuesday for Iranian general elections due in March officially launching campaigning for the polls to elect a 270-seat parliament.

The election hopefuls have seven days in which to register in their electoral district and then all the lists will be sent to the Council of Guardians, a body established in 1980 to supervise elections.

The council will rule on Feb. 12 whether the candidates have met all the technical and ideological criteria set out under the Islamic republic's election laws.

Some 5,000 candidates are expected to register, according to the Interior Ministry. But during the last polls in 1992, one in three of the hopefuls was rejected by the Council of Guardians.

Candidates must be over the age of 30 and less than 75, mentally stable, know how to read and write and not have a criminal record. They must also "believe in and actively engage in Islam and the Islamic regime," "support the constitution of the Islamic republic," and "have allegiance to the progressive principle of velayat-e-faqih (the government of religion)," or support paramount leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

The council is made up of six religious leaders appointed by Ayatollah Khamenei and six legal experts appointed by the parliament.

In the 1992 polls it rejected 1,100 candidates for not conforming to the electoral law, with many from the Islamic radical left-wing in the majority in the outgoing parliament

being prevented from running.

It opened the way for a coalition of Islamic conservatives and moderates to come to power, leading to protests from the Organisation of the Mujahedeen of the Islamic Revolution which found itself sidelined.

Officially the anti-Western group has said it will not be in the running in the March 8 poll but several left-wing groups have said they would present candidates.

The strongest and most organised force is the Society of the Militant Clergy (SMC), the coalition which has dominated the country's political life for the past four years.

It will field a list in Tehran and back candidates in all other districts, totalling 196.

The "Group of Sixteen" which gathers moderate technocrats close to President Hashemi Rafsanjani appeared on the political scene three weeks ago and announced it would put forward candidates in Tehran and other major cities.

The group, set up around nine ministers, four vice-presidents, the governor of the central bank and the mayor of Tehran, aims to challenge the SMC, which refused to include moderates on its lists.

It has the backing of the Islamic left-wing and the professional associations which act as trade unions.

The main liberal opposition movement, the Liberation Movement of Iran, announced Monday that it would after all field individual candidates, reversing an earlier decision not to stand.

Israel's right turns left with eye on general elections

TEL AVIV (AFP) — The right-wing opposition, torn between its dream to a "greater Israel" and the new reality of Palestinian autonomy, opened the door Tuesday for a lunge toward the political centre ahead of elections.

"If we take power, I'm not dreaming of sending our tanks to recapture Gaza City and Nablus," Benjamin Netanyahu, the youthful leader of the Likud party, said in reference to the two biggest cities now under the control of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA).

"Israeli voters prefer the centre, and that's where I'm planning to go," Mr. Netanyahu, 46, told reporters.

Such pragmatism has opened a rift in Likud, the main opposition to Prime Minister Shimon Peres' Labour Party, between the new generation of pragmat-

ists surrounding Mr. Netanyahu and conservative hardliners led by Benny Begin, son of the late Likud Prime Minister Menachem Begin.

The split broke into the open late Monday during a stormy meeting of the Likud central committee called to hammer out a platform for elections to be held by October.

Past Likud policy, previously backed by Mr. Netanyahu, was to refuse recognition of agreements reached between the Labour government and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) granting Palestinians autonomy in the Gaza Strip and main West Bank population centres.

But opinion polls showing both a solid majority of Israelis supporting autonomy and a big electoral lead for

Labour over Likud, Mr. Netanyahu and his supporters have changed tack.

"The six cities handed over to Palestinians (in the West Bank) will remain in their hands, although the rest of the territory must remain ours," he said Tuesday.

"When Likud takes power, it will have to adapt to the new realities in Judea and Samaria (the West Bank) and in the Gaza Strip and to take up the negotiations (with PNA) where Labour left off," said Jerusalem's Israeli mayor, Ehud Olmert, a close Netanyahu associate.

His Likud partner in Tel Aviv city hall, Mayor Roni Milo, went further, admitting the legitimacy of the Palestinian elections on Jan. 20 in which "Yasser Arafat and his followers were the victors."

"We must recognise them as partners and negotiate

with them," he said during Monday night's debate.

"There has been a fundamental change in the situation that we can no longer ignore. Those who refuse to acknowledge Palestinian autonomy are running away from reality," he said.

Such views infuriate the Likud old guard. PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat will always be Arafat," insisted former Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir.

"The assassination of Yitzhak Rabin is not a valid reason for changing the Likud ideology," he said, referring to the Labour prime minister who piloted the peace process before being felled by a Jewish extremist's bullets in November.

At Monday's meeting, Mr. Begin set himself up as the "defender of greater Israel"

running from the Mediterranean to the Jordan River.

He joined three other Likud members of parliament in declaring that they are ready to "return to Gaza" if elected.

But they appeared increasingly isolated. Meir Shetrit, a leading Likud deputy, argued that "if the party doesn't change its platform it will be the end of Likud."

"For the first time since Likud's creation 20 years ago, we have to change our ideas," he said.

Even Likud hawks like retired general Yitzhak Mordechai and Yossi Peled have softened their position, saying they will reconsider their views on Mr. Arafat if the PLO amends its charter to scrap calls for the destruction of Israel.

Mr. Arafat is committed to seek such a change in coming weeks under the terms of the autonomy accords signed with Mr. Rabin.

Likud's impending policy shift is causing deep concern for the party's traditional supporters among the 140,000 Jewish settlers living on the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Some settler leaders have threatened to vote against Mr. Netanyahu if he runs against Mr. Peres for the post of prime minister, which will be elected directly for the first time in the upcoming polls.

The legislative and prime ministerial vote is scheduled for Oct. 29, although Labour officials say Mr. Peres would move the polls forward to June if current peace talks with Syria yield no significant results within a month.



Japan police reprimand boys linked to suicide

TOKYO (AFP) — Japanese police have reprimanded three boys suspected of bullying a 13-year-old classmate who committed suicide in northern Japan last year, a spokesman for the Niigata Prefectural Police said Tuesday.

The spokesman said the three boys, two 13-year-old students and one 12-year-old from Kasuga Junior High School in Joetsu, allegedly forced Hisashi Ito to undress on several occasions before he killed himself in November. "Police believe these actions and the fact that he was ignored by other students contributed to the suicide," the spokesman said.

The three were reprimanded as children under the age of 14 in Japan cannot be charged with criminal offences. Ito hung himself in the garden of his home, leaving a suicide note which accused five classmates of bullying him. Japan saw a jump in teenage suicides linked to bullying towards the end of last year. Another two students committed suicide in separate incidents in southern Japan last week with both cases also linked to bullying at school.

Cats sets record as longest running musical

LONDON (R) — Cats, the Andrew Lloyd Webber show based on poems by T. S. Eliot, entered the record books Monday by becoming the world's longest running musical with 6,137 performances. The musical that was first staged at the New London Theatre in London in 1981 and has been going ever since has earned more than £1 billion (\$1.5 billion) worldwide.

Nine productions are running, from New York to Tokyo. It surpassed the previous record of 6,137 performances held by the Broadway production of A Chorus Line. Cats is just one of a string of hits from the multi-millionaire composer including Phantom Of The Opera and Evita.

Mother gives birth to Mexico's biggest baby

MEXICO CITY (R) — A 28-year-old housewife has given birth to a baby weighing 15.84 pounds (7.2 kg), said by doctors to be the biggest ever born in Mexico, a hospital official said. Jorge Gonzalez, director of the Morelos Maternity Hospital in the southern town of Chetumal, said that both mother and daughter were doing well despite the baby's size. "The two of them are well at home. They're both fine," he told Reuters. The baby was delivered by caesarean section at 0020 local time on Jan. 9.

Relatives duel over remains of gunslinger

EL PASO, Texas (R) — More than 100 years after his death, relatives and fans of the infamous wild west gunslinger John Wesley Hardin are set to slug it out in court over where his body should be buried. One side, made up of Hardin descendants, want the bones taken from his current resting place in a cemetery in El Paso to Nixon, Texas, and reburied next to his first wife, Jane. "It's really a family matter about where a body should be buried," said Gene Stevens, a Dallas lawyer representing the descendants. "The family should be allowed to call the shots." But the El Paso Pistoleros, who re-enact gunfights, want Hardin's body to remain in the town where he was shot dead.